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From Surprise to Reckoning

The Kargil Review Committee Report

*New Delhi
December 15, 1999*



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Abbreviations

AAWG	Annual Average Rate of Growth
A	Aircraft
AD	Air Defence
AEC	Atomic Energy Commission
AGPL	Actual Ground Position Line
AJK	'Azad Jammu and Kashmir'
APHC (KJHC)	All Party Hurriyat Conference/ Kul Jamaat Hurriyat Conference
AQKRL	AQ Khan Research Laboratories (Pakistan)
ARC	Aviation Research Centre
Arty	Artillery
ATC	Air Traffic Control
BADC	Base Air Defence Centre
BARC	Bhabha Atomic Energy Research Center
BAT	Border Action Team
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
B	Brigade
BIT	Brigade Intelligence Team
BJP	Bharatiya Janta Party
Bn	Battalion
Brig	Brigadier
BSF	Border Security Force
C	Cabinet
C.S.	Cabinet Secretary
Capt	Captain
CA	Chief of Air Staff
CBM	Confidence Building Measures
CCS	Cabinet Committee on Security
Cmdr	Commander

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AQKRL	AQ Khan Research Laboratories (Pakistan)
ARC	Aviation Research Centre
Arty	Artillery
ATC	Air Traffic Control
BADC	Base Air Defence Centre
BARC	Bhabha Atomic Energy Research Center
BAT	Border Action Team
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
Bde.	Brigade
BIT	Brigade Intelligence Team
BJP	Bharatiya Janta Party
Bn	Battalion
Brig.	Brigadier
BSF	Border Security Force
Cab	Cabinet
Cab.Secy.	Cabinet Secretary
Capt.	Captain
CAS	Chief of Air Staff
CBMs	Confidence Building Measures
CCS	Cabinet Committee on Security
Cdr.	Commander

CFL	Cease Fire Line
CGE	Central Government Expenditure
CGS	Chief of General Staff
CI	Counter-insurgency
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
CMDS	Counter Measure Dispensing System
COAS	Chief of Army Staff
Col.	Colonel
Comd.	Command
COMINT	Communication Intelligence
COSC	Chiefs of the Staff Committee
Coy.	Company
CPMIEC	China Precision Machinery Import and Export Corporation
CPOs	Central Police Organisations
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation
DAI	Directorate of Air Intelligence
DCOAS	Deputy Chief of Army Staff
DESTO	Defence Science and Technology Organisation (Pakistan)
DG	Director General
DGMI	Director General of Military Intelligence
DGMO	Director General of Military Operations
DGRR	Director General Rashtriya Rifles
DIB	Director, Intelligence Bureau
DIPAC	Defence Imagery Processing & Analysis Centre
DIU	Division Intelligence Unit
Div.	Division
DNI	Directorate of Naval Intelligence
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DRDO	Defence Research and Development Organisation (India)
Dt.	Dated
DTD	Directorate of Technical Development (Pakistan)
Dte.	Directorate

EAM	External Affairs Minister
ELINT	Electronic Intelligence
FCNA	Force Commander Northern Area
FDO	Fysisich Dynamisch Oeborlaboratorium
FIPs	Field Intelligence Posts
FIS	Fortnightly Intelligence Summary
FM	Foreign Minister
FMCT	Fissile Materials Cutoff Treaty
Fmn.	Formation
FS	Foreign Secretary
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Gen.	General
GHQ	General Headquarters
GNP	Gross National Product
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GOI	Government of India
GPS	Global Positioning System
GR	Gorkha Rifles
GSI	Geological Survey of India
HeU	Highly Enriched Uranium
HF	High Frequency
HM	Hizbul Mujahideen
HMX	Her Majesty's Explosive
HQ	Headquarters
HTPB	Hydroxy-Terminated Polybutadiene
HUA	Harkat-ul-Ansar (now Harkat-ul-Mujahideen)
(now HUM)	
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IAF	Indian Air Force
IB	Intelligence Bureau, International Boundary
IDC	International Data Centre
IDSA	Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis

IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IFSU	Intelligence and Field Security Unit
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
IMINT	Imagery Intelligence
IN	Indian Navy
Inf.	Infantry
IRBM	Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (Pakistan)
ITBP	Indo-Tibetan Border Police
J&K	Jammu and Kashmir
JAK LI	Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry
JAK RIF	Jammu & Kashmir Rifles
JCO	Junior Commissioned Officer
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee (India)
JKLF	Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front
KANUPP	Karachi Nuclear Power Plant
KRC	Kargil Review Committee
LAC	Line of Actual Control
LeT	Lashkar-e Toiba
LeU	Low Enriched Uranium
LIC	Low Intensity Conflict
LOC	Line of Control
Lt.	Lieutenant
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MI	Military Intelligence
MIR	Monthly Intelligence Review (JIC)
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MOP	Mobile Observation Post
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
Mtn.	Mountain
NAM	Non-aligned Movement

NBC	National Broadcasting Corporation (US)
NDC	National Development Complex (Pakistan)
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NH-1A	National Highway-1A.
Nk.	Naik
NLI	Northern Light Infantry (Pak)
NPT	Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty
NSA	National Security Agency (US)
NSAB	National Security Advisory Board
NSC	National Security Council
NSCS	National Security Council Secretariat
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Countries
Op. BADR	Operation BADR
ORBAT	Order of Battle
ORP	Operational Readiness Platform
P-5	Five permanent members of the UN Security Council
PAEC	Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission
PAF	Pakistan Air Force
Pak	Pakistan
PINSTECH	Pakistan Institute for Science and Technology
PM	Prime Minister
PML (N)	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)
PMNS	Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif
PMO	Prime Minister's Office (India)
PN	Pakistan Navy
PNVD	Passive Night Vision Device
POK	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
POW	Prisoner of War
PPP	Pakistan Peoples' Party
Pt.	Point
PWS	Part-worn Serviceable
R&AW	Research and Analysis Wing
RAJ RIF	Rajputana Rifles

RDX	Rapid Detonation Explosive
Rtd	Retired
RM	Raksha Mantri
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
ROD	Record of Discussion
RPV	Remotely Piloted Vehicle
RR	Rashtriya Rifles
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SASE	Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment
SB	Special Bureau
Sect.	Sector
Sectt.	Secretariat
Sep.	Sepoy
SF	Security Forces
SITREP	Situation Report
SIU	Signal Intelligence Unit
SNEP	Subterranean Nuclear Explosion Project
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
Sqn.	Squadron
SRBM	Short Range Ballistic Missile
SSG	Special Services Group
SSM	Surface to Surface Ballistic Missile
SUPARCO	Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Pakistan)
SW Spur	South-West Spur
TECHINT	Technical Intelligence
Tpt.	Transport
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UFO	Unidentified Flying Objects
UHQ	Unified Headquarters
UN	United Nations
UNCIP	United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan

UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Commission
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSSOD	United Nations Special Session on Disarmament
URENCO	Uranium Enrichment Corporation (Europe)
US	United States
VCOAS	Vice-Chief of Army Staff
WAC	Western Air Command
WASO	Winter Air Surveillance Operations

Prologue: Challenge and Response

Not for nothing is Dras reputed to be one of the coldest habitations in the world. Though "only" 10,000 feet high, it is the wind chill that freezes. Unforgiving winds sweep down from the heights of Tiger Hill and Tololing that soar 15,000 feet and more above the huddled township.

It was from and on these forbidding heights that the Kargil War was fought through May until July 1999 along a 200 kilometre trans-Himalayan front: Mashkoh, Kaksar, Bimbat, Batalik, Yaldor, Turtok—and then the Salto Ridge, marking the western flank of the Siachen Glacier which emerges immaculate from the majestic snowfields of the high Karakoram. Most of these names were seldom heard before. Who will forget them now? The blood of the best and bravest has consecrated them indelibly in memory. Sector Haneef is but one remembrance.

This was no mere border war or just another, though fiercer, artillery tattoo that characterises so much of the 740 kilometre-long Line of Control (LOC) and the 110 kilometre Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) along the Salto Ridge in Jammu & Kashmir. It was an extraordinary war, this Fourth War of Kashmir, fought at impossible heights in what will go down as the most inhospitable and unlikely battleground in the history of warfare.

Pakistan chose its ground with treacherous cunning, even as India was being feted with an olive branch and promise of a negotiated peace that climaxed February's triumphant busride to Lahore. The deception continued through March when the two Foreign Ministers further cemented what was thought to be the beginning of a new relationship at the margins of a SAARC meeting in Colombo. Bonhomie marked the conversations of the two Director Generals of Military Operations.

Harsh Terrain

The terrain along the LOC in this northern reach is for the most part highly glaciated and avalanche-prone, a desolate, uninhabited desert waste of serrated, knife-edge ridges piercing the sky. Jagged peaks fall away precipitously several thousand feet to valleys-of-no-return enclosed by rock walls, crazily sculpted crags rising sheer to pinnacles of 13,000 to 18,000 feet that mark another ridge line. And so on, in serried ranks on both sides. It is the weather that largely rules wastelands like the trackless Mashkoh Valley along this stretch of the LOC.

There is an austere beauty about the harsh and cruel landscape. A short burst of summer finds it wearing patches of grass and gorse that tinge the ochre-brown hills with streaks of green and rose, capped with white in the higher reaches. These picture-postcard scenes are ephemeral as winter comes once more to claim its own.

The LOC from Manawar, on the international border near Jammu, to Gurez, above the upper Kishenganga, is closely held, with the two armies virtually confronting one another eyeball to eyeball. These hills are gullied and densely forested and provide infiltrators routes of ingress with suitable cover. Beyond Gurez, moving east through Ladakh, the LOC is marked by intermittent posts separated by "unheld gaps" of 10 to 45 kilometres. So grudging and virtually impassable is the terrain here, that both sides have traditionally maintained just temporary summer posts, from which they launched patrols, only to withdraw from them variously between November and May when General Winter resumes command.

This is country that would dare a bold ibex at the best of times. Come winter and the Westerlies bring 10 to 20 to 40 to 60 feet of snow and crashing avalanches. Only trained mountaineers, specially clothed, shod, equipped and rationed, would venture to risk a passage through nowhere to nowhere.

The Indian Army held the nodal points in depth along the LOC through which any enemy must pass to exit the unheld gaps. It was, therefore, undoubtedly surprised to discover the enemy on the commanding heights above the strategic National Highway 1A that climbs up from the Vale of Kashmir to Ladakh, crossing the

Himalaya at Zojila (11,500 feet) to Dras and thence to Kargil en route to Leh. This was not infiltration which had for the past decade been the name of the game; nor only an intrusion, but a blatant invasion whose conceptual daring and initial execution was matched by the brazen deception that informed it.

The Pakistanis, however, were perhaps even more surprised by the swift and determined reaction they encountered from the Indian military and political leadership which they appeared to have rashly written off as effete and fractious. The enemy was rudely ousted in a series of deft and innovative land and air engagements at those dizzying heights. On July 16, when Pakistan lamely announced the "withdrawal" of its battered Northern Light Infantry (NLI) formations from across the LOC, there was little left from which to withdraw. The fiction of "Mujahideen", many of them in fancy dress, engaged in yet another valiant episode in Kashmir's "freedom struggle" also lay in tatters as just one more hollow lie. The Pakistan Army was roundly defeated and left scrambling to save face. The Washington communique that Nawaz Sharif fashioned with President Clinton gave it an exit which India provided only to be subsequently confronted with rearguard trickery.

Military Legends

Military history is not without legends of mountain crossings and mountain warfare. The Carthaginian General, Hannibal, crossed the Alps in 218 BC during the second Punic War, harassed by Gallic tribes, to descend with 28 surviving war elephants into the Po Valley in Italy after a gruelling 15-day march. In the 15th Century, Topa Inca Yupanqui, the great Inca prince, conquered much of Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Chile, traversing the Andes at heights of possibly up to 13,000 feet. Inca gold attracted the attention of the Spanish conquistadors, but the expanding Hispanic empire was bitterly harried by the last Inca, Topa(c) Amaru (1545-72). His guerilla tactics inspired the name given to the Kashmir war game "Operation TOPAC" that was written by an Indian group around 1989 to project what Pakistan might do. The proxy war which unfolded thereafter has closely followed that script.

In Asia, Babar crossed the Hindu Kush in Afghanistan in the winter of 1525-26 in his march on India. Losing his way, he crossed the Lower Zirrin Pass, his army facing considerable peril in heavy snowdrifts, making an agonising advance step by step after "beating down the snow". In his memoirs, Babar writes: "In the few days that followed, many were the difficulties and hardships that we endured; indeed such hardships and sufferings as I have scarcely undergone at any other period of my life."

These expeditions and others like them elsewhere certainly rank as famous exploits. But all pale into insignificance as every one of them peaked or ended at levels where the Kargil War began. This was an incomparably harsher environment, enveloped in cloud, at elevations where men, arms and equipment, supplies, logistics, trajectories, ballistics, manoeuvres, flight paths, combat flight plans, surveillance and, indeed, very survival, hinged on acclimatisation of one kind or another in that rarefied, deoxygenated atmosphere. It demanded improvisation and sheer will power.

Normally, on this kind of ground, commanders might seek a 10 to 1 superiority before attacking the enemy. Such superiority was not available, nor sought. Battle was joined.

There were no texts on firing heavy guns from extremely narrow emplacements at 10-12,000 feet at micro-targets located several thousand feet higher; scaling up bare rock under unrelenting enemy fire from vantage points above, with no place to hide; ascending cliff-faces with pitons and rope, laden with punishing loads of arms, ammunition and essential supplies, under cover of darkness in a bid to avoid enemy observation and to effect surprise; to engage in close combat at more than alpine heights to capture a critical feature or "sanghar", or silence a pitiless gun; to build up sustainable supply lines in such terrain; to have Stinger missiles shoot at own aircraft from surrounding peaks; to undertake moonlight bombing, rocketing and strafing to destroy or soften up enemy positions and administrative bases before launching a final ground assault on what could be literally no more than a pin-point; to avoid casualties to own advancing troops from friendly artillery fire or aerial bombardment; to operate helicopters at almost their ceiling and high speed combat aircraft in narrow valleys with limited turning circles; to

evacuate casualties, retrieve the dead, and even bury the fallen enemy with Islamic rites and military honours. All this without infringing the LOC. The Indian Armed Forces displayed both valour and chivalry beyond the call of duty.

Television War

This was India's first television war. Kargil entered distant homes, both as a battleground and a symbol. For the first time, the bodies of the dead were carried back from the battlefield to their homes for the last rites. People in each State paid homage to heroes drawn from every community. Kargil knit the country together as never before.

A Shillong journal* said it well. Emotion, respect and pride marked the spontaneous reactions with which the tricolour-wrapped caskets of the fallen were received by mourning crowds in Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya and Assam. Wrote the journal: "The first myth that has been shattered once and for all, is the belief that people in the Northeast do not want to be a part of India, as several separatist groups [have been] fighting [the] Indian security forces for the last few decades.... These reactions can be taken to mean that the people feel that the country's territorial sovereignty is non-negotiable ...".

If conditions were so difficult and the area quite so "impassable", how did the Pakistanis manage to intrude undetected to depths of 5 to 9 kilometres at a number of points? The captured diary of a Pakistani Captain, Hussain Ahmad of the 12 NLI in the Mashkoh sector tells its own story.

Elements of the 12 NLI crossed the LOC in February 1999, losing 11 men and then another sepoy in two avalanches that struck these camps on February 25 and March 25. There is reference to "terrible thirst", living in igloos (snow tents), and to at least eight Indian air reconnaissance missions along the Mashkoh Valley which failed to detect them.

The diary is punctuated with entries about blizzards and prayers for salvation. The noting on April 12 reads: "The weather cruellest,

* *Grassroots Options*.

...and the most nasty. Disappointed to the lowest ebb of hope and courage. No mercy from Allah Almighty received yet after five days rigorous treatment. Prayers. Cry in the desert". The weather improved three days later when an Indian reconnaissance helicopter again appeared overhead.

The *Dialist* calls the intrusion a move to establish a "new LOC" and quotes Pakistan's COAS, General Pervez Musharraf, who visited the Mashkoh sector on March 28, as describing the gambit as "a reply to [India's] Siachen invasion of 1984". The General handed out Rs. 8000 "for sweets to be distributed amongst 12 NLI 'Mujahids'".

Further evidence of the Great Mujahideen Hoax is found in Captain Hussain Ahmad's diary entry on May 19, after the action had been joined. On return from a spell of leave, Ahmad flew from Gultari on board a helicopter with "ISI pers". He writes of "making a movie of Mujahideen and myself as a party to work inside the enemy territory. Kashif post kills 35 Indian tps in close encounter. No casualty". Later, he reports that four Mujahideen were with him. But two of them fell ill "due to ht effect" and had to be sent back.

The Kargil War saw tens of thousands of artillery rounds being fired by the Indian side. The Pakistani troops in retreat laid a number of booby traps and anti-personnel mines on the heights from which they retreated. Some 8,500 mines were later defused by the advancing Indian forces.

The Gamble Fails

The Pakistani strategists obviously gambled on many factors. They calculated on a normal winter; a weak and vacillating Indian reaction; a strong element of surprise that would enable them to consolidate their gains along the "heights of Kargil"; their own redoubtable capacity to obfuscate and a willingness on the part of traditional patrons to play along; early internationalisation of the situation, compelling foreign intervention from fear of a possible nuclear escalation. All these were expected to combine. This would force an early ceasefire and negotiations on "the new LOC". Otherwise, if they could hang on until October, winter would bring the curtain

down until the next campaigning season, giving time for a planned retreat and/or appropriate political theatre.

Unfortunately for them, the winter of 1998–99 was milder than usual and the snows melted earlier, with Zojila reopening by early May. The Indian response was totally unexpected. The artillery pounding was severe and the intervention of the Indian Air Force unnerving. The Indian Army and Air Force secured a clear military decision with Operation VIJAY and Operation SAFED SAGAR respectively without escalating beyond the LOC. And all this was achieved well before winter. It was Nawaz Sharif's turn to appeal to his people to pray while Pakistan, isolated and exposed, scurried to find a fig leaf in Washington.

The Pakistan Army's position in Kargil was untenable. Had winter come, retreat or severe attrition could not have been far behind. The operation was militarily unsustainable. It was at best a political gamble, but otherwise so irrational and implausible as to have been virtually ruled out by the Indian side which was in any case exclusively focussed on infiltration, not on intrusion or invasion. The lesson, if any, is that an irrational or rogue action can never be ruled out.

Did the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in May 1998 rule out a major conventional war between them? Possibly not; but only up to a given threshold, which margin was exploited by Pakistan. It sought to blackmail the international community to force India to accept a ceasefire and mediation on the Kashmir question. None of this worked. While India consciously took a political decision to limit the action to its own side of the LOC, Pakistan was also conscious of the limits to which it could go.

It was startled by the Indian Navy's deterrent deployment, Operation TALWAR, that bottled up its fleet in Karachi. Aware of its vulnerability, Pakistan ordered its ships not to tangle with any Indian vessel. Any engagement would have resulted in exposing its fuel dumps and sea lanes to the Gulf from which it gets its oil.

The three Services fought with complete cohesion and the military and diplomatic offensives too were closely coordinated. The country rallied to present the aggressor and the world a united front. For the first time an Indian woman helicopter pilot flew in a war zone;

474 men were killed and 1,109 wounded. The artillery, especially the 155mm Bofors gun, took a heavy toll of the enemy. Morale was extremely high and young officers led from the front.

Yet India was not militarily well prepared. There were critical gaps in the Armed Forces' inventory. The Chief of Army Staff went public in stating that, if war came, the Army would "fight with whatever it has". It so happened that the Kargil crisis erupted amidst the political acrimony in the aftermath of the fall of the Government, with the country poised for a crucial general election. The existence of only a caretaker Government in office, however, in no way affected the conduct of the war. This was vigorously pursued to a highly successful military and diplomatic conclusion with a degree of maturity and restraint that won acclaim. Yet the prevailing circumstances did create an environment in which the why, what and how of Kargil got politicised. Not surprisingly, but nonetheless regrettably, some of the media's war coverage tended to become both the vehicle and victim of such politicisation.

Everything said, at the end of the day, it was something of a unique victory. But there is much to ponder and hard lessons to be learnt.

It is to these that this Report now turns.

Chapter 1

Appointment, Approach and Methodology

Appointment and Terms of Reference

1.1 Pakistan's aggression in Kargil evoked intense debate on different facets of the conflict. Many questions were raised, in particular, about whether or not the intrusions could have been detected earlier and about the manner in which they were actually confronted. Against the backdrop of this prolonged and heated public discussion, the Union Cabinet decided on July 24, 1999 to constitute a Committee to look into this episode. The order communicating the Government's decision was issued on July 29, 1999 (**Annexure 1.1**) with the following Terms of Reference:

- (i) "To review the events leading up to the Pakistani aggression in the Kargil District of Ladakh in Jammu & Kashmir; and
- (ii) to recommend such measures as are considered necessary to safeguard national security against such armed intrusions."

1.2 The Committee comprised four Members, namely K. Subrahmanyam (Chairman), and Lieutenant General (retd.) K.K. Hazari, B.G. Verghese and Satish Chandra, Secretary, National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) who was also designated Member-Secretary. The bio-data of the Members are given in **Annexure 1.2**. The Committee was given a period of three months to submit its Report; this was subsequently extended up to December 15, 1999.

1.3 Given its open-ended terms of reference, the time constraint and, above all, the need for clarity in setting about its task, the

Committee found it necessary to define its scope of work precisely. Recognising that it may be too simplistic to examine the Kargil episode in isolation, the Committee felt that the Report should recount the important facets of developments in J&K and the evolution of the LOC, the history of Indo-Pak relations, the proxy war in Kashmir and the nuclear backdrop; but its 'review' should essentially be from 1997 onwards coinciding with Nawaz Sharif's return to office as Prime Minister of Pakistan. This framework has enabled the Committee to undertake an intensive and focussed examination of developments immediately preceding and during the intrusions.

1.4 The Committee felt that it should analyse whether the possibility of the kind of Pakistani aggression that materialised could have been assessed from the indicators and intelligence available and, if so, what shortcomings and failures, if any, contributed to the nation being caught unawares. The Committee has exhaustively addressed all aspects relating to intelligence, the intrusions, their discovery and the action taken to contain and evict the intruders. However, it did not consider it appropriate to go into the details of the actual conduct of operations. That was outside its mandate and would have called for a different kind of expertise. The Committee limited itself to the period ending with the authorisation of use of air power and the Indian Armed Forces generally adopting a posture of deterrence vis-à-vis Pakistan on May 26. However, a brief outline of the progress of operations is available in the presentations of the Army, Air Force and Navy which are appended to the Report (Appendix F). As regards the other term of reference relating to safeguarding national security against future armed intrusions, the Committee decided to confine its scope to possible threats to the country's land borders given the fact that it was set up in the context of the Kargil intrusions. An attempt has been made to bring within the purview of its recommendations, the activities of those agencies which have a direct responsibility for safeguarding national security. As some of the Committee's recommendations are generic in nature, they relate to future threats to the country's security, whether on its land borders or otherwise.

Approach

1.5 The Committee approached its task in a spirit of openness and transparency with the sole objective of establishing the facts. It did not consider it appropriate to attempt to fix responsibility on particular individuals. That would have made it necessary to adopt inquisitorial procedures. Its endeavour has been to see what lessons the country and the guardians of its security can learn from the Kargil experience. The Committee viewed its task as a cooperative venture with the concerned Ministries, Defence Services, Intelligence Agencies and other concerned organisations. It scrupulously avoided getting into an adversarial relationship with the officials and non-officials with whom it was required to interact in the process of its enquiry. Given this approach it was able to enlist the willing co-operation of all concerned. The result and wisdom of this approach may be judged by the contents of the Report.

Methodology

1.6 The Committee was not constituted under the Commissions of Inquiry Act and was consequently not formally authorised to summon witnesses and requisition the documents. It would, however, like to place on record the fact that it was given the widest possible access to all relevant documents, including those with the highest classification and to officials of the Union and Jammu and Kashmir Governments. The Cabinet Secretary, vide his letter of July 30, 1999, advised the concerned Secretaries to Government to provide the Committee access to all concerned officials and relevant records, including classified documents (Annexure 1.3).

1.7 The Committee sought presentations from the Armed Forces and the Intelligence Agencies. These were followed by questions and clarifications which enabled Members to get a clearer understanding of the complex issues involved and also other aspects not forming part of the initial presentations. As the Army had played a major role in the Kargil operation, there were four meetings with the Chief of Army Staff, which included presentations by the DGMI, DGMO and DCOAS. The presentation of the Chief of Air Staff

was supplemented by three others—one by the AOC-in-C, Western Command, who was responsible for the Kargil air operations, the Deputy Chief of Air Staff in New Delhi and the AOC, J&K at Udhampur. The Chief of Naval Staff briefed the Committee on the role played by the Navy during the Kargil conflict. Texts of the presentations of Army, Naval and Air Headquarters have been included in **Appendix F** of the Report. Several other presentations were organised by the Chiefs of Intelligence Agencies and the heads of certain departments functioning under their administrative control such as the ARC. All intelligence reports, military sitreps, signal intercepts and captured documents were made available to the Committee and further material and records were submitted to it on request, including some bearing the highest classification.

1.8 The Committee sought meetings with all those who in its judgement were in a position to throw light on the subject. It met former President R. Venkataraman, Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee, ex-Prime Ministers V.P. Singh, P.V. Narsimha Rao and I.K. Gujral, the Home Minister, External Affairs Minister, Defence Minister, the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, the Governor and the Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, the Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister, the Special Executive Assistant to the External Affairs Minister, the National Security Adviser, India's Ambassador in Washington, the Cabinet Secretary, the three Service Chiefs and their Staff Officers, the Defence Secretary, the Foreign Secretary, the Home Secretary, Secretary (R), Director Intelligence Bureau, Director General Border Security Force, Chief Secretary J&K, a number of other civilian, military and intelligence agency functionaries, and several knowledgeable members of the print and electronic media, many of whom had covered the Kargil operations or visited Pakistan thereafter. The Committee also met a large number of retired officials including several former Service Chiefs, retired Cabinet Secretaries, retired Foreign Secretaries, retired Intelligence Chiefs and others with a specialised knowledge of issues falling within its ambit. The Committee met a very large number of other persons. It requested meetings with former Prime Ministers Chandrasekhar and Deve Gowda, but these could not materialise. The former expressed his inability to make any purposeful contribution to the

Committee's work and the latter pleaded preoccupation with other pressing commitments. R.K. Mishra, Chairman, Observer Group of Publications, also regretted his inability to meet the Committee in view of the "current situation" in Pakistan.

1.9 While the statements of those interviewed were not made on oath, the Committee's Secretariat maintained Records of Discussions which were sent to the concerned Ministers, officials and others for their authentication. Their Records of Discussion have been appended to the Report (**Appendix B**).

1.10 In their interactions with the Committee, officials and others narrated their own version of events, some of which had taken place quite some time ago. Their views were based on their own perceptions, recollections, assessments and analyses. A certain degree of divergence and, sometimes, even discrepancies in their perception and recall of particular events was therefore only to be expected. Where there were glaring discrepancies, the Committee endeavoured to rely as far as possible on documentary evidence or to base its judgement on other circumstantial evidence. It is a matter of gratification that the Committee did not come across a single instance of refusal to answer a question as fully and completely as possible.

1.11 The Committee prepared detailed questionnaires to elicit information from heads of various organisations. Based on the replies received, supplementary questionnaires were in some cases sent to elicit further information. Responses to the questionnaires are at **Appendix A**.

1.12 The Committee has exercised its discretion in making certain security deletions in the Records of Discussion, responses to questionnaires and other material annexed or appended, in order to preclude the dissemination of sensitive information. These deletions have been identified at appropriate points with the notation "Security Deletion".

1.13 The Committee made four visits to various parts of J&K to get a better feeling of the terrain and prevailing field conditions. (A schedule of the Committee's visits is appended at **Annexure 1.4**.) During these visits the Committee covered those sectors where intrusions had occurred and interacted with field commanders of the

Army, officials of Intelligence Agencies, State Government functionaries, representatives of the local media and interest groups, the civilian population of affected areas and others in a position to furnish useful information. It also covered other sectors of J&K, including Siachen and some along the LOC, and met the Northern Army Commander, GOsC of 15 and 16 Corps, GOsC 3, 19, 25 and 28 Divisions, and selected brigade and battalion Commanders for discussion on issues pertaining to the variety of threats faced by them including infiltration and proxy war. The Committee also had the opportunity of informally interacting with a number of young officers who had participated in the actual operations. Bangalore was visited in order to obtain first hand knowledge of certain defence research and development facilities and for discussions with experts regarding certain technological options.

1.14 Soon after its constitution, the Committee invited reliable information from the public pertaining to events leading up to the Pakistani aggression in Kargil. This was done with a view to ensuring that no information of value escaped its attention. A press note in this regard was published in the national dailies and regional media on August 5, 1999. In response to this notice a number of letters were received from members of the general public. The Committee has given due consideration to these inputs and, in particular, carefully examined communications which suggested leads worth following. (A copy of the press note and a list of those who responded and their communications are enclosed in **Appendix E**.)

1.15 The Committee scanned a large number of news items and commentaries which were published in the national dailies, journals and magazines. Accounts appearing in leading Pakistani newspapers, journals and radio broadcasts were similarly analysed to see if they could provide any useful leads. The Report bears witness to materials derived from the Pakistani media. The Committee also perused several books published in recent months on the Kargil conflict.

1.16 The Committee thus attempted to collect relevant information from all possible sources within the time available. Its findings are based primarily on official documents, authenticated records and copies of captured documents, while other parts of the Report

draw on materials received by the Committee and views of experts and knowledgeable persons who were invited to interact with it.

1.17 The Report contains 14 chapters with elaborate end-notes and annexures. These are supplemented by maps and appendices. A historical background to J&K and of Indo-Pak conflicts over it, and on the evolution of the LOC, Pakistan's *modus operandi* and India's responses are given in Chapter 2. The focus of Chapter 3 is on the events leading up to the Kargil conflict. It deals with the Simla Agreement, Indo-Pak relations up to the Lahore Declaration and Pakistan's proxy war in J&K. Public awareness of how the army functions in the field and how responsibilities are devolved on different formations being inadequate, the Committee considered it desirable to outline the system of operational management by the Indian Army and to reconstruct the sequence of events leading up to Kargil and the initial response by it to contain and repel the intrusion. These aspects have been addressed in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 deal with the national intelligence framework, the intelligence inputs available up to the Kargil intrusion and an analysis and assessment of the available intelligence. Given the implications of defence expenditure for military preparedness and national security, budgetary trends, particularly over the last decade, have been analysed in Chapter 9. The nuclear factor was one of the highlights of the public debate on Kargil. Chapter 10 discusses this element and its bearing on Kargil. The Kargil War brought out in bold relief the manner in which the electronic and print media create awareness of such events, and the need for sharing information with the nation. This issue has been dealt with in Chapter 11. The Committee felt that its task would not be complete unless it dealt with a question frequently raised: could Kargil have been avoided? This has been done in Chapter 12. The findings and recommendations of the Committee are contained in Chapters 13 and 14. The Report concludes with an epilogue. The voluminous documentation relied upon by the Committee for its work has been put together for wider reference in eight appendices to the main report while more immediate references are explained in end-notes and annexures to chapters.

1.18 It has been suggested that there was a conflict of interest with two Members of the Committee being Members of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB). The NSAB is a wholly non-official, advisory body and its Members have no responsibility whatsoever for the Government's current security policies and management. The NSAB was tasked to formulate a nuclear doctrine and to prepare a strategic defence review. Its Members have no other responsibility. The National Security Council (NSC) met the NSAB Members on June 8, 1999, a month after the Kargil intrusion, but only to hear their individual views on the J&K situation. Therefore membership of the NSAB did not in any way hamper the independent functioning of the Committee.

1.19 Secretary (NSCS) was appointed Member-Secretary of the Committee. This too gave rise to speculation regarding a possible conflict of interest. Since the Member-Secretary belongs to the Indian Foreign Service and had joined the JIC barely four months prior to the discovery of the Kargil intrusions there was little room for any conflict of interest. Moreover, the Member-Secretary himself pointed to deficiencies in the functioning of the JIC and the reasons thereof, in his statement before the Committee (Appendix B). The Additional Secretary, Ministry of Defence, who was working as a senior Joint Secretary in JIC for several months preceding the Kargil conflict, has also acknowledged the JIC's handicaps in his statement (Appendix B). In the circumstances, the Committee is satisfied that there was no conflict of interest. This is also borne out by the fact that the Committee has not been inhibited in any manner in focusing on the shortcomings of JIC/NSCS.

1.20 The Committee's work was in fact greatly facilitated by the NSCS. The ready availability of its officers and staff saved it from having to create a separate Secretariat with all the consequent delays which such an exercise would have entailed. The Committee was readily able to access much of the documentation relevant for its work, in the custody of NSCS. The officers and the staff of the NSCS provided the Committee valuable assistance in terms of research support, scheduling meetings, maintaining records of discussions, administrative coordination, logistics and stenographic assistance. In fact, a team of officers of the Secretariat has been working with

the Committee, almost on a full time basis, for four months. The Committee would like to place on record its appreciation of the excellent work done by these officers and staff of the NSCS. The Committee took the assistance of only one Consultant, P.K.S. Namboodiri, a retired officer of the JIC, who made a very useful contribution but declined to accept any remuneration.

1.21 Finally, none of this would have been possible but for the desire of all those who interacted with the Committee—civil, political, military, non-official—to share their views and experiences with complete candour so that the country should know and learn and get as near the truth as possible.

Chapter 2

Historical Background

History and Its Impact on People and Society

Early History

2.1 The Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) region has had a millennial political and cultural connection with the Indian heartland. Kashmir is associated with the Hindu epics, early Buddhism, and a vibrant Sufi-Rishi tradition that followed the advent of Islam, which was adopted by choice in the 14th Century. The resultant co-mingling of religion and culture has remained the proud hallmark of the Valley and its tradition of Kashmiriyat. It is this long and living cultural link that Pakistan has sought to destroy through jihad in the name of Islamic fundamentalism. By seeking thus to subvert the very soul of Kashmir while denying democratic rights to those on their own side of the LOC, Pakistan has demonstrated that what drives it is not self-determination but self-aggrandisement.

2.2 The history of Kashmir goes back to antiquity. It finds a mention in the Puranas and there is a belief that the Pandavas once ruled Kashmir. Emperor Ashoka brought Buddhism to Kashmir in the 3rd Century B.C. Kanishka held the Third Buddhist Council in Kashmir. Among the most famous Kashmiri rulers was Lalitaditya (A.D. 697–738), who heralded a golden age. Muslim rule in Jammu & Kashmir dates back to around 1339 when Shah Mir of Swat and Reinchan Shah from Tibet fought back the Tartar invaders. Reinchan Shah converted to Islam. His reign was followed by that of Shah Mir who occupied the throne, taking the name of Shamsuddin. During the late 14th and early 15th Century a large number of adherents to the Sufi school of Islam came to Kashmir from Persia and

Central Asia. Among them was Mohammed Hamadani whose shrine at Khanqah remains a place of pilgrimage even today for Kashmiris of all faiths. Among the most venerated Sufi teachers was Sheikh Nuruddin (a disciple of the Rishi Lallechwari) also known as Nund Rishi, in whose memory the famous shrine of Charar-e-Sharif was built. This shrine was destroyed by Mast Gul in May 1995.

2.3 Zainul Abedin who ruled Kashmir from 1417 to 1469 was reputed for tolerance, patronised the fine arts, undertook the building of infrastructure and established a responsive administration. His half-century reign was followed by a period of turbulence after which order was only restored in 1589 when the Mughul Emperor, Akbar, established his supremacy. History acknowledges Akbar as a most enlightened ruler. During Aurangzeb's reign Kashmir relapsed into disorder before falling under Pathan control.

2.4 The Pathan period was the cruelest in the annals of Kashmir. The memory of those times remains alive even today. The Pathans were defeated by the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh, who finally gained ascendancy over Kashmir in 1819. The Dogra, Gulab Singh, was appointed Governor of Jammu under the Sikh darbar and his General, Zorawar Singh conquered Ladakh and Baltistan. The rise of Sikh power, however, brought the Lahore darbar into conflict with the British. At the conclusion of the Anglo-Sikh wars, the British handed over the mountainous territories between the Ravi and the Indus to Gulab Singh for a consideration of Rs. 75 lakh. Before the end of the 19th Century the territories to the north of the Kishenganga had been brought under Dogra control.

2.5 Meanwhile, India's North-West had become a focus of the Great Game and British moves to check Russia's southward expansion. Gilgit was annexed in 1859 by Ranbir Singh who succeeded Gulab Singh in 1856. Hunza, Nagar and Chitral were fully brought under the Dogra darbar by 1870. Pratap Singh succeeded Ranbir Singh in 1885 and after his death his nephew, Hari Singh, became the ruler of Jammu & Kashmir and was the occupant of the "gaddi" at the time of Partition in 1947.

2.6 Under British pressure the Gilgit Agency was established in 1889 and the de facto administration of the Gilgit frontier passed into the hands of the Raj. In 1935 the Maharaja signed a lease deed

with the British under which the Gilgit Wazarat was leased to the Raj for 60 years subject to the condition that the territory would continue to remain under the jurisdiction of the Maharaja. With the approaching lapse of Paramountcy in 1947, the British handed Gilgit back to the Kashmir Maharaja. Brigadier Ghansar Singh Jambwal was appointed Governor of Gilgit and assumed his office two weeks before the Transfer of Power in India. However, the Governor was arrested by the Gilgit Scouts, led by a British Officer, Major W.A. Brown, and a military government established on November 1 which declared itself in favour of Pakistan. A fortnight later, Pakistan appointed a political officer to take charge of the administration. All this was wholly illegal.

2.7 As part of the nationalist movement, the National Conference of J&K under Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah established fraternal links with the Indian National Congress and the National Conference became a member of the Indian States Peoples Congress headed by Jawaharlal Nehru. The National Conference had a strong popular base in the Kashmir Valley in particular while the Muslim Conference, which had close links with the Muslim League, enjoyed some popularity in the western part of the State which is currently under the control of the Muzaffarabad Government.

Geography and Plural Composition

2.8 The former Princely State of J&K had a total area of 2,22,236 sq. km. Of this, 78,114 sq. km. is under the occupation of Pakistan, of which again 5,180 sq. km. in the Shaksgam Valley was ceded by it to China in 1963 as part of a boundary settlement. Approximately 37,555 sq. km. in Ladakh is under Chinese occupation. The State of J&K which acceded to India on October 26, 1947, has five main regions: Kashmir, Jammu, Ladakh, "Azad Kashmir (AJK)" so-called, and the Northern Areas.

2.9 Kashmir is administratively divided into six districts with an area of 15,948 sq. km. and a population of just over 4 million. The main language is Kashmiri with Gojari being spoken to a lesser degree. Kashmiri-speaking Muslims constitute the predominant community in the Valley followed by Gujjars. Kashmiri Pandits

constituted a significant minority which has very largely left the Valley as a result of a brutal process of ethnic cleansing by militant forces since 1990. While most Valley Muslims are Sunni, there are concentrations of Shias in certain areas.

2.10 The Jammu region also consists of six districts with an area of 26,293 sq. km. and a population of under 3.6 million. The principal languages spoken are Dogri, Pahari and Punjabi with some Kashmiri-speaking people in Doda. This province is inhabited by Hindus, Punjabi Muslims, Paharis and Gujjars. Hindus comprise 66.3% of the population. However, Doda, Poonch and Rajouri have a Muslim majority while Zaskar is Buddhist. The Dogras and the Poonchis of the Jammu region were traditionally given to soldiery, with 60,000 Poonchis having served in the Indian Army in the Second World War. The Gujjars are said to be Rajput migrants from Rajasthan who adopted Islam. They practice transhumance and are scattered all over the State.

2.11 Ladakh, which includes the districts of Leh and Kargil, has an area of 96,701 sq. km. with a population of 171,000. The principal languages spoken are Ladhaki or Bodhi (akin to Tibetan) in Leh, and Balti and some Dardic dialects in Kargil. The Buddhists enjoy a small overall majority in the region (51%), whereas in Kargil, Muslims, mostly Shia, constitute a majority of around 78%.

2.12 On the other side of the LOC, the so-called "AJK", with its headquarters at Muzaffarabad, has five districts, namely, Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Kotli, Poonch and Bagh, with an area of 13,297 sq. km. and an estimated population of 3.5 million. (According to the 1981 Census, the population was 1.98 million with an annual growth rate of 2.7%.) The people of "AJK" are mostly Sunni Muslim and speak a mix of Punjabi, Pahari and Pushto. There are virtually no Kashmiris in "Azad" Kashmir.

2.13 The Northern Areas originally consisted of Gilgit and the "Frontier Illaqs" of Hunza, Nagar, Punial, Yasin, Kuh, Ghizar, Ishkoman and Chilas, all petty chieftainships in feudatory relationship with the Maharaja of J&K. The region is traversed by traditional trade routes from the plains of India to Xinjiang, Central Asia and Afghanistan. From the 3rd Century B.C. to the 11th Century A.D. the area was ruled by Buddhist kings until the advent of Islam under

Dardi rulers. The Northern Areas spread over an area of 72,495 sq. km. and have an estimated population of 1.3 million (1990). They are inhabited by a variety of ethnic groups of which the most significant are Balti, Shin, Yashkun, Pathan, Mongol, Tadjik and Turk, and the languages used are Balti, Shina, Brushaski, Khawer, Wakhi, Turki, Tibetan, Pushto, Urdu and Persian. The Northern Areas have a majority Shia population with significant numbers of Ismailis and Nurbakshis (a Sufi sect). Shia-Sunni tensions run high and there have been periodic riots. The construction of the Karakoram Highway has resulted in the induction of large numbers of security personnel, traders and other functionaries which has resulted in a measure of demographic change and an increase in the Sunni population.

2.14 The overall population on the Indian side of the LOC was estimated at 7.7 million in 1981. Its community-wise breakup was: Muslim 64.3%; Hindu 32.1%; Sikh 2.16%; Buddhist 1.17% and others, including Christian 0.26% (1981 Census).*

2.15 J&K is a conglomeration of several distinct peoples inhabiting well-defined regions and sub-regions with each group having its own language, culture, customs, manners and history. However, in the Valley there is a strong bond of Kashmiriyat that binds all communities in a cultural and religious fraternity. This togetherness seems to have emerged out of intense interaction among Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic influences with the bonding of a strong Rishi-Sufi tradition.

2.16 The veneration of saints and shrines of all religions is very much a part of the Kashmiri psyche and springs from the composite culture that Kashmiriyat represents. It embodies the tolerance, harmony and religious co-existence that has fashioned the spirit of the people even in times of adversity, including periods of war and terrorism. A remarkable manifestation of this ethos is the annual

Jamarnath Yatra when Hindu pilgrims visit the cave discovered by a Muslim family and is, even today, cared for by the descendants of that family. So deep-rooted is the belief in religious harmony that at the time of partition, J&K remained free of the communal violence that plagued many other parts of the Indian sub-continent.

2.17 Sir Owen Dixon in his report of September 15, 1950 to the Security Council had noted: "...The State of J&K is not really a unit geographically, demographically, or economically. It is an agglomeration of territories brought under the political power of the Maharaja. That is the unity it possesses."¹ The Princely State of Jammu & Kashmir was indeed a conglomerate entity which evolved over several decades with piecemeal accretions. The British encouraged the Maharaja to take control of Gilgit, Hunza, Nagar and other "Frontier Illaqs" to keep the Russians from crossing the Pamir/Karakoram rampart as part of the Imperial Great Game.

2.18 The composite J&K State on the eve of the Transfer of Power in 1947 had only been in existence for around 60 years. It was composed of several well-demarcated regions and sub-regions inhabited by distinctive, religious, linguistic and ethnic groups in what was more an administrative unit rather than a well integrated political entity. There were very limited ties or even contacts between these different regions and peoples, though several trade routes linking the Indian heartland to Central Asia traversed the State.

2.19 More significant in today's context is the fact that the CFL/LOC represents a broad ethnographic and cultural divide. There are no Kashmiris nor Buddhists nor Dogras on the Pakistan side of the LOC. The people of "AJK" are mostly akin to the Punjabi and Hazara-Pathan population across the international border in Pakistan. Likewise, the population of the Northern Areas is Central Asian in character. The Sufi-Rishi tradition that created Kashmiriyat is peculiar to the Valley. The fundamentalist Islamic tradition of the jihadis who have been launched by Pakistan to fight their proxy war in Kashmir have little sympathy for Sufi-Rishi syncretism which is almost heretical for them. No wonder that Mast Gul and the other jihadis with him had no compunction in desecrating and destroying the venerated Sufi shrine at Charar-e-Sharif.

* No Census was conducted in 1991 but the provisional estimate of J&K's population for that year was 7,718,700 (see Government of J&K Digest of Statistics 1997-98, [1999], Table 1.01). According to the estimates of the Registrar General of India, J&K's population as on July 1, 1999 was 9,787,000.

Lapse of Paramountcy

2.20 British Paramountcy over Princely India lapsed with the passage of the Indian Independence Act of July 18, 1947. Section 7(b) of the Act read: "The suzerainty of His Majesty over the Indian States lapses, and with it, all treaties and agreements in force at the date of the passing of this Act between His Majesty and the rulers of Indian States, all functions exercisable by His Majesty at that date with respect to Indian states, all obligations of His Majesty existing at that date towards Indian States or the rulers thereof, and all powers, rights, authority or jurisdiction exercisable by His Majesty at that date in or in relation to Indian States by treaty, grant, usage, sufferance or otherwise."

2.21 Jinnah expressed the view on June 13, 1947 that the States were entitled to join either constituent assembly. While the Congress protested against the theory of Lapse of Paramountcy, Jinnah in a statement issued on June 18, 1947, unequivocally declared that constitutionally and legally the States would become independent sovereign States on the termination of Paramountcy and would be free to adopt any course they liked.

2.22 Jinnah espoused the sovereign right of the rulers and was opposed to self-determination by the people or consultation with the peoples' representatives or popular political parties. The Congress pleaded otherwise. Its democratic aspirations had brought its leaders in line with the popular will and sentiments of the States' peoples as opposed to the whims of their rulers.

2.23 Under the Indian Independence Act, the Princes were free to execute an Instrument of Accession acceding to either Dominion under the heads of Defence, External Affairs and Communications. They could also choose to remain independent. Lord Mountbatten, however, made it clear to them in an address that they would need to keep in mind the compulsions of geographical contiguity, viability, security and other practical considerations and cast their lot with either India or Pakistan.

2.24 There was nothing like provisional or conditional accession under the Independence Act. Nor was there any question of taking

account of the religious or ethnic composition of individual Princely States.

2.25 The overwhelming majority of the 570 or so Princely States lay embedded in or were contiguous to what became the Dominion of India and freely acceded to it, signing the standard Instrument of Accession. Only a few Princely States bordered on what was to become Pakistan. Even so a number of Baluch principalities under the Khan of Kalat, who exercised suzerainty over them, and the State of Bahawalpur were incorporated into Pakistan by coercive means.

2.26 On August 15, 1947, only three Princes remained undecided: Hyderabad, an enclave wholly within the Dominion of India; Junagadh in Kathiawar (today's Saurashtra in Gujarat) which was fragmented, with a number of enclaves embedded in the Indian Dominion and vice versa; and J&K. When the rulers of Hyderabad and Junagadh demurred, India suggested a referendum to ascertain the popular will in both States. Pakistan rejected this approach.

2.27 The legal framework for independence provided for rulers to enter into Standstill Agreements with either or both the Dominions in the interregnum while they determined their choice. Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu & Kashmir offered such Standstill Agreements to both Dominions. Pakistan signed a Standstill Agreement with Hari Singh on August 14, 1947. India did not do so, seeking prior consultations with the popular leadership which could not take place. In total disregard of its Standstill Agreement, Pakistan cut off essential supplies such as salt and petrol, stopped the supply of currency notes and small coins to the Imperial Bank in Kashmir, and severed postal and telegraphic connections. Matters became increasingly critical despite the Maharaja's protests.

Pakistan Invades J&K

2.28 The blockade was a prelude to a tribal invasion of J&K sponsored by Pakistan and assisted by some of its Army regulars on "leave" as well as ex-servicemen. The raiders plundered and pillaged their way to the very gates of Srinagar.

2.29 The State being gravely imperilled, the Maharaja appealed for assistance to India which urged its formal accession in order to

ensure a complete legal as well as moral basis for military intervention. The Maharaja executed the Instrument of Accession on October 26, 1947 and it was accepted by the Government of India that same evening with a simultaneous endorsement and appeal for help by Sheikh Abdullah, the popular National Conference leader.

2.30 Plans to airlift Indian troops were immediately put into motion. Thus J&K had become part of India by accession by the time Indian forces started landing in Srinagar on the morning of October 27. Kashmir was saved. Following accession, the State was incorporated into the Indian Union under Article 1 of the Constitution and listed in its First Schedule as among the territories of India. The area included the entire domain of the Maharaja of J&K as at the time of accession. Relations between the State and the Union are constitutionally governed under the terms of Article 370.

2.31 Pakistan protested the accession. Acrimonious diplomatic exchanges followed between Delhi and Karachi. In the face of Pakistan's bland denials of involvement and its obduracy in pursuing its support for the "freedom fighters" in J&K, India on January 1, 1948 took the Kashmir question to the UN Security Council on a charge of aggression by Pakistan. It sought a peaceful solution of the matter under Chapter VI of the Charter. (India had gone to the UN under Article 35 of Chapter VI of the Charter which calls on that body to "recommend appropriate procedures or methods of adjustments" for the pacific settlement of disputes and not for "action" with respect to acts of aggression as provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter.)

2.32 Pakistan levelled a range of counter-charges and had the title of the matter before the Security Council amended to the India-Pakistan Question.

2.33 Lieutenant General Sir James Wilson, then a Major and Military Assistant to General Douglas Gracey, the Pakistan Army Chief in 1948-49, recorded: "It remained vital for Pakistan to defend the mainly Muslim areas of Kashmir outside the vale itself. A fiction, therefore, arose by which this territory became the responsibility of a local militia, known as the Azad (Free) Kashmir Forces, commanded by a regular Pakistani Officer, who used the "nom de guerre" of General Tariq (real name Colonel Mohamad Akbar Khan, DSO).

Elements of the Pakistan Army found their clandestine way into the Azad Kashmir Forces in sufficient numbers to stabilise the military situation. British officers were strictly prohibited from taking part in these operations, and were not permitted to enter Kashmir. Both Messervy and Gracey were aware of the progressive reinforcement of the Azad Kashmir forces from the regular Pakistan Army. Neither, however, gave any instructions or advice to General Tariq, who dealt directly with Iskander Mirza, the Defence Secretary, and through him with Liaqat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister who also held the Defence portfolio."²

2.34 While Pakistan has always claimed that the Government was not behind the raids and that these were a spontaneous expression of Muslim sentiment following reports of killings of Muslims in Jammu & Kashmir, the facts are revealed by Major General Akbar Khan, the officer who organised the invasion. He states in *Raiders in Kashmir*: "...I wrote out a plan under the title 'Armed Revolt inside Kashmir'. As open interference or aggression by Pakistan was obviously not desirable, it was proposed that our efforts should be concentrated upon strengthening the Kashmiris internally—and to prevent arrival of armed civilian or military assistance from India into Kashmir..."³

2.35 Margaret Bourke-White, among others, describes the plunder by the raiders: "Their buses and trucks, loaded with booty, arrived every other day and took more Pathans to Kashmir. Ostensibly they wanted to liberate their Kashmiri Muslim brothers, but their primary objective was to riot and loot. In this they made no distinction between Hindu, Sikhs and Muslims. The raiders advanced into Baramulla, the biggest commercial centre of the region with a population then of 11,000, until they were only an hour away from Srinagar. For the next three days they were engaged in massive plunder, rioting and rape. No one was spared. Even members of the St. Joseph's Mission Hospital were brutally massacred."⁴

At the United Nations

2.36 The truth of Pakistan's military complicity in J&K could not be hidden. On August 13, 1948 the UN Commission for India

and Pakistan passed a Resolution: "...As the presence of troops from Pakistan in the territory of the State of Jammu and Kashmir constitutes a material change in the situation since it was reported by the Government of Pakistan before the Security Council, the Government of Pakistan agrees to withdraw its troops from the State...." The Resolution also called upon Pakistan to "...secure the withdrawal from the State of J&K of tribesmen and Pakistani nationals not normally resident therein who have entered the State for the purpose of fighting..."

2.37 The Resolution was in three parts (Annexure 2.1). There was to be a ceasefire, followed by a truce, which inter alia entailed withdrawal of all Pakistani forces and tribals who had been inducted into the area by Pakistan. On the satisfactory completion of the terms thereunder there would finally be a reference to the will of the people through a plebiscite. Pakistan never fulfilled Part II, without which Part III remained in limbo. Subsequently, Pakistan was to be in glaring default of Part I as well.

2.38 The UN Resolutions calling for ascertainment of the will of the people in J&K are no longer tenable because Pakistan never fulfilled the essential preconditions of withdrawal from the territory occupied by it through aggression and disbandment of the "local forces" on its side. The long delay in implementation of the Security Council Resolutions led Gunnar Jarring, the UN Representative for J&K, to report to the Security Council on April 29, 1957, as follows: "...In dealing with the problem under discussion as extensively as I have during the period just ended, I could not fail to take note of the concern expressed in connection with the changing political, economic and strategic factors surrounding the whole of the Kashmir question, together with the changing patterns of power relations in West and South Asia. The Council will, furthermore, be aware of the fact that implementation of international agreements of an ad hoc character, which has not been achieved fairly speedily, may become progressively more difficult because the situation with which they were to cope has tended to change."⁵

2.39 Meanwhile the Constituent Assembly of J&K had commenced work in 1951. Addressing it Sheikh Abdullah said on November 5:

"...In the final analysis, as I understand it, it is the kinship of ideals which determines the strength of ties between two States. The Indian National Congress has consistently supported the cause of the State's people's freedom. The autocratic rule of the Princes has been done away with and representative governments have been entrusted with the administration. Steps towards democratisation have been taken and these have raised the people's standard of living, brought about much-needed social reconstruction, and, above all built up their very independence of spirit. Naturally, if we accede to India there is no danger of a revival of feudalism and autocracy. Moreover, during the last four years, the Government of India has never tried to interfere in our internal autonomy. This experience has strengthened our confidence in them as a democratic State.

"The real character of a State is revealed in its Constitution. The Indian Constitution has set before the country the goal of secular democracy based upon justice, freedom and equality for all without distinction. This is the bedrock of modern democracy. This should meet the argument that the Muslims of Kashmir cannot have security in India, where the large majority of the population are Hindus. Any unnatural cleavage between religious groups is the legacy of Imperialism, and no modern State can afford to encourage artificial divisions if it is to achieve progress and prosperity. The Indian Constitution has amply and finally repudiated the concept of a religious State, which is a throw back to medievalism, by guaranteeing the equality of rights of all citizens irrespective of their religion, colour, caste and class...

"The national movement in our State naturally gravitates towards these principles of secular democracy. The people here will never accept a principle which seeks to favour the interests of one religion or social group against another. This affinity in political principles, as well as in past association, and our common path of suffering in the cause of freedom, might be weighed properly while deciding the future of the State."⁶

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK)

2.40 While J&K has enjoyed a full measure of constitutional and democratic rights, the same cannot be said of that part of J&K under Pakistan's occupation. The so-called "AJK" had no elections until 1960. From 1960 till the Interim Constitution of 1974 only indirect elections were held to the "basic democracies" evolved by Ayub Khan. "AJK" was effectively governed through the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs in Islamabad and a Chief Adviser of the rank of a Joint Secretary appointed by the Pakistan Government. Since Bhutto's Interim Constitution of 1974, the main executive authority in "AJK" has vested with the "AJK" Council of which the Pakistan PM is the Chairman and which he dominates with six nominees and residuary powers. Each executive head of Pakistan, be it Ayub, Bhutto or Zia, did exactly what he wanted in POK, bringing in martial law or the form of government he desired, suspending political activities whenever he chose, and sacking the President/Prime Minister at will.

2.41 The Northern Areas have long had no more than a colonial status. No constitution of Pakistan (1956, 1962 and 1973) has recognised the Northern Areas as part of Pakistan or of "AJK". Development has been slow and the region periodically afflicted by Shia-Sunni riots. In May 1988, the Shia majority of Gilgit rose in revolt against the Sunni-dominated administration. General Zia put an SSG group commanded by General Musharraf in charge of suppressing the revolt. General Musharraf reportedly transported a large number of Pakhtoon tribesmen from the NWFP and Afghanistan to Gilgit to teach the Shias a lesson. They massacred hundreds of Shias.⁷

2.42 The "Legal Framework Order", 1974, placed the Northern Areas under the total control of the Kashmir Affairs Ministry in Islamabad. However, in April 1993, the "AJK" High Court gave a judgement ruling the Northern Areas to be part of "Azad" J&K and directed the "AJK" Government to assume administrative control over the area. The Pakistan Supreme Court, however, overturned this judgement. It defined the Northern Areas to be part of the

"Azad" J&K but outside the jurisdiction of the Muzaffarabad Government under the 1974 Interim Constitution.

2.43 In the middle of the Kargil operations in May 1999 the Pakistan Supreme Court handed down a verdict on a number of petitions moved by plaintiffs from Gilgit demanding democratic and fundamental rights. The Court ruled in their favour and ordered the Pakistan Government to introduce democratic reforms in the Northern Areas within six months through appropriate modifications in the electoral, judicial and administrative structures so as to bring about representative and responsible government.

2.44 Accordingly, fresh elections were held in the Northern Areas early in October 1999, presumably under a proposed reform package, days before Pakistan itself forfeited democracy with the imposition of military rule under General Musharraf. Where this leaves the Northern Areas democratic reform programme remains uncertain.

Evolution of the Ceasefire Line (CFL)/LOC/Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL)

2.45 The Karachi Agreement of July 27, 1949 delineated and demarcated a ceasefire line. This was signed by the Indian and Pakistan military commanders as well as by representatives of UNCIP. The CFL was demarcated from Manawar in the South to "Khor, thence north to the glaciers" through NJ 9842 (Annexure 2.2). Article B(2)(d) of the Agreement reads: "...follow the line of Chorbat La (Point 15700), Chalunka (on the Shyok river), Khor, thence north to the Glaciers".

2.46 As a result of the ceasefire at the end of the 1965 war, the two sides agreed to exchange the territories captured by either across the CFL thus restoring the status quo ante. However, after the 1971 war, both sides kept the gains they had made across the CFL under the Simla Agreement. The Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, took a political decision to this effect and redesignated the resultant line as the LOC. The change in nomenclature signified a transition from a military line separating

two armies brought about by the UN-arranged ceasefire in 1949 to a political divide which should evolve into a boundary.

2.47 This decision taken, the two military commands were directed to delineate and demarcate the LOC. This was done by Lieutenant General P. S. Bhagat of India and Lieutenant General Abdul Hamid Khan of Pakistan and an agreement was signed at Suchetgarh on December 11, 1972 (*Annexure 2.3*). The LOC was elaborately demarcated and reproduced in two sets of maps, each containing 27 map sheets formed into 19 mosaics. As a result of the 1971 war, the Indian Army acquired the Turtok sector comprising five villages—Chalunka, Thang, Tyakshi, Pharol and Turtok (254 sq. miles). This area has since remained a focus of attention by Pakistan. There were reports of infiltration of men and arms into this area in the 1990s.

2.48 The LOC traverses some 740km from the international border in the South up to NJ 9842 from which, in accordance with the unchanged definition of the parent 1949 Karachi Agreement, it must run “thence north to the glaciers”. There was never any Pakistani presence in the vicinity of Siachen. This area was always under Indian control and during the International Geophysical Year in 1957 and subsequently the Geological Survey of India had extensively surveyed the Siachen and other glaciers in the region⁸ (*Annexure 2.4*). However, Pakistan sought to alter this position. By the Sino-Pakistan boundary agreement of 1963, the Shaksgam Valley in northern J&K was ceded by Pakistan to China. Thereafter Pakistan began developing roads in the Northern Areas towards the Eastern Karakoram and was assisted by China to develop the Karakoram Highway from Gilgit to Xinjiang across the Khunjerab Pass. Pakistan then began to licence mountaineering and scientific expeditions to the Eastern Karakoram and followed up with projecting the LOC as moving from NJ 9842 not “north to the glaciers” but northeast to the Karakoram Pass.

2.49 This cartographic encroachment found encouragement in American maps produced by the US Defence Mapping Agency which depicted the LOC running from the vicinity of NJ 9842 northeast to the Karakoram Pass. It remains a mystery why and how this should have happened and what the US interest might

have been in the matter. The best explanation appears to lie in the possible “translation” of Air Defence Information Zone markings, which provide zoning boundaries for air controllers in civil/military aviation, into an extension of the LOC from NJ 9842 to the Karakoram Pass. The coincidence of the two alignments was presumably fortuitous; but in the result it has been adopted by a number of international atlases which have thereby unwittingly falsified the LOC to India’s detriment and created a new “dispute” within the “Kashmir dispute”.

2.50 Sometime in 1983 the Indian Army got wind of Pakistan plans to physically move into the Siachen area. Being understandably sensitive to the implications of cartographic ambiguity after 1962, the Army took pre-emptive action and in April 1984 occupied the Salto Ridge which marks the western wall of the Siachen glacier.⁹

2.51 The Government of India approved this action on the clear understanding that the definition of the CFL/LOC from the original Karachi Agreement of 1949 to the Simla Agreement of 1972 places the Siachen Glacier on the Indian side of the alignment from NJ 9842 “thence north to the glaciers”. Pakistan has ever since been smarting under what it perceives as the humiliation of being robbed of a prize.

2.52 The extension of the LOC beyond NJ 9842 is designated the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) by India. This meets the International Boundary (IB) west of the Karakoram Pass. Further east, the IB gives way to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China in Ladakh.

2.53 There have been occasions in the past when both sides have made efforts to improve their tactical positions along the LOC. Up to 1990, Pakistan had made 12 such attempts and taken an area of just over 11 sq. km. in adverse possession. The Indian side had suitably responded.

Pak Modus Operandi and India’s Response in the Past

2.54 The Pakistani side has displayed remarkable consistency in its modus operandi of armed confrontation with tribesmen/armed irregulars and jihadis playing the role of “freedom fighters” prior to

a military offensive. Terrorism, incitement of the local population and disruption of the civil administration have all formed part of its offensive strategies in the past.

2.55 This strategy was put into operation at the dawn of independence itself. On October 22, 1947, some 200–300 vehicles carrying at least 5,000 Afridis, Waziris, Masuds, Swatis and other tribesmen, organised under Pakistan Army personnel “on leave”, launched an attack along the Jhelum Valley Road. The Pakistan General, Akbar Khan, who masterminded the operation, subsequently revealed the details. He recorded that “the tribal attack was a great success so far as it went. In fact it was more of a success than I as a soldier would have thought possible.”¹⁰ The task of the invaders was made easy by some desertions from the J&K State army. These deserters were joined by personnel of Pakistan’s Frontier Police and newly raised “Azad Kashmir” batallions. Pakistan vigorously disclaimed any role in the tribal invasion, though this bluff could not long stand up to hard evidence on the ground and remain concealed.

2.56 The UNCIP was to describe disclosure of the ground reality as a “bombshell”, as Pakistan had steadfastly disavowed the presence of its troops in J&K. The UN mediator, Sir Owen Dixon was to say in 1951 that Pakistan’s act of sending tribal raiders into the State and the subsequent entry of its own regular forces were “inconsistent with international law”. This was a very mild and circuitous way of describing an act of aggression against which India had gone to the UN Security Council. But, even so, the UN failed to act on the logic of this conclusion and continued to place the aggressor on par with the victim of his aggression. The Cold War had begun to divide the world and Pakistan was in the process of becoming a frontline State in the service of the West in its confrontation with Communism.

2.57 The identical sequence was to be repeated in 1965 when Pakistan launched “Operation GIBRALTAR”. Several columns of Pakistani intruders entered the State, in an invasive action that was hopefully to coincide with an internal uprising in J&K. The latter did not materialise and the intruding columns were soon dispersed.

2.58 The UN Secretary General reported to the Security Council on September 3, 1965 stating that the ceasefire agreement in J&K

had collapsed. He reported that “the series of violations that began on August 5 were to a considerable extent in subsequent days in the form of armed men generally not in uniform, crossing the CFL from the Pakistan side for the purpose of armed action on the Indian side. This is a conclusion reached by General Nimmo on the basis of investigations by the United Nations Observers in the light of the extensiveness and character of the raiding activities and their proximity to the CFL”.¹¹

2.59 The sordid details of “Operation GIBRALTAR” have been fully recorded by Pakistan’s own military and political leaders. In his Foreword to Air Marshal Asghar Khan’s book, *The First Round: The India Pakistan War 1965*, Altaf Gauhar had revealed that Pakistan first mounted the guerrilla operation on August 5 and then followed it up with an open military attack on Kashmir in the Chhamb sector on September 1, led by Major General Akhtar Hussain Malik, GOC, 12 Infantry Division.

2.60 There were both similarities and differences in the 1947 and 1965 Pakistani tactics in sending invaders into J&K. The tribesmen in 1947 were disorganised and unruly whereas the intruders in 1965 were carefully chosen, trained, armed and organised. In 1965, the mercenaries were supported not only by a strong military regime in Rawalpindi but also by the local POK Government. On both occasions the apparent assumption by the Pakistanis was that the Kashmiris were in a rebellious mood and Pak-sponsored intrusions would trigger a popular uprising. On both occasions, the Pakistani establishment and media not only disclaimed any responsibility for the invasions but openly came out in favour of the Kashmiri “revolt”.

2.61 In the context of frequent ceasefire violations, the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru had stated in the 1950s itself that an attack on J&K would be treated as an attack against India of which it is an integral part. It is under this doctrine that Lal Bahadur Shastri authorised the Indian Army to cross the international border in Punjab on September 6, 1965 in response to the full-fledged Pakistani attack on J&K.

2.62 Since 1990 there have been massive violations of the LOC by Pakistan as part of its proxy war in J&K. This is dealt with in the next Chapter.

2.63 The very same story was once again repeated in May, 1999. Pakistan's denials of intervention by its own regular armed forces in Kargil were soon exposed. Captured documents, the interrogation of prisoners and signal intercepts proved to the hilt that it was not freedom fighters, but regular units of the Pakistani army under the FCNA command that were engaged in battle on the Kargil heights. Unlike in the past, the world took note of this deception and the G-8, with the United States in the lead, told Pakistan that it must withdraw its troops and regulars from the Indian side of the LOC and respect its sanctity.

2.64 It is not without irony that the dates of general elections in India were announced in the midst of the Kargil campaign. J&K once more went to the polls to elect its Parliamentary representatives just as there was a democratic breakdown in Pakistan with yet another military takeover.

Notes

1. S/1791, Report of Sir Owen Dixon, September 15, 1950.
2. *USI Journal*, Delhi, April-June 1997.
3. Akbar Khan, *Raiders in Kashmir: Story of the Kashmir War 1947-48*, Pak Publishers, Karachi, 1970.
4. Margaret Bourke-White, *Half Way to Freedom*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1949.
5. Sisir Gupta, *Kashmir: A Study in India-Pakistan Relations*, Asia Publishing House, New York, 1966, p. 324.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
7. B. Raman, "General Pervez Musharraf: His Past and Present", Institute for Topical Studies, July 1, 1999 Chennai.
8. In response to a query, the Geological Survey of India informed the Committee that the entire Siachen region up to the Karakoram Pass was repeatedly surveyed and mapped by a series of scientific expeditions that it mounted from 1956 onwards. The area of interest was the Nubra and Shyok Valleys and the glaciers in the region (see **Annexure 2.4**).
9. Lieutenant General M.L. Chibber, "Siachen: The Untold Story (A Personal Account)", *Indian Defence Review*, January, 1990.
10. Akbar Khan, *op. cit.*
11. B.L. Sharma, *The Kashmir Story*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1967, p. 161-62.

Chapter 3

Review of Events Leading up to Kargil

3.1 Pakistan's behaviour has been driven by a desire to avenge its defeat in 1971 and subsequent discomfiture in Siachen. In this context, Pakistan's strategy vis-à-vis India has had three broad interconnected strands: undermining the Simla Agreement and internationalising the Kashmir issue; waging a proxy war against India to tie up the Indian Army in counter-insurgency operations; and pursuing a nuclear programme to achieve strategic parity with India and using the nuclear capability to seize Kashmir at an appropriate opportunity.

Simla Agreement, Jammu & Kashmir and Indo-Pak Relations

Simla Agreement

3.2 The Simla Agreement, concluded on July 2, 1972 in the aftermath of the 1971 Indo-Pak war, provides a comprehensive framework for normalisation of relations between the two countries (**Annexure 3.1**). It has, despite tensions from time to time, succeeded in preventing major armed conflicts between the two countries since 1971 until Pakistan chose, in violation of the Agreement, to commit overt aggression against India in May 1999 in Kargil.

3.3 The Simla Agreement contains a set of basic principles designed to guide bilateral relations which, if adhered to, would not just prevent hostilities but also promote harmonious relations. Article 1(ii) commits both countries to "settle their differences by peaceful

means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them". Bilateralism is indeed at the very heart of the Simla Agreement. The same Article further stipulates, "Pending the final settlement of any of the problems between the two countries, neither side shall unilaterally alter the situation and both shall prevent the organisation, assistance or encouragement of any acts detrimental to the maintenance of the peaceful and harmonious relations." Both countries are thus clearly committed to desist from any unilateral move which would come in the way of peaceful relations. Respecting the sanctity of the Line of Control (LOC) is crucial to the maintenance of peace between the two countries. Article 4(ii) says, "In Jammu & Kashmir, the Line of Control resulting from the cease-fire of December 17, 1971 shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognised position of either side. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both sides further undertake to refrain from the threat or the use of force in violation of this Line."

3.4 Article 2 of the Simla Agreement specifically binds both governments to "take all the steps within their power to prevent hostile propaganda directed against each other". It prohibits the use of force in bilateral relations. Article 1(v) & 1(vi) provide that both countries "shall always respect each other's national unity and territorial integrity" and will "refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of each other". Having laid down these basic principles of mutual behaviour, the Agreement recognises that it will not be possible to settle all problems immediately. Accordingly, Article 3 provides for the step by step normalisation of relations.

3.5 Pakistan's immediate concerns after the 1971 war were vacation of the Indian occupation of about 5,000 sq. km. of Pakistani territory and securing the release of over 90,000 Prisoners of War. Both these objectives were facilitated by the Simla Agreement. Accordingly, Article 4(iii) stated that the troop "withdrawals shall commence upon entry into force of this Agreement and shall be completed within a period of 30 days thereof" and Article 6 spoke of meetings of representatives of the two sides inter alia to discuss

"the questions of repatriation of prisoners of war and civilian internees".

3.6 The Kashmir issue figured prominently in the discussions leading up to the Simla Agreement. According to P.N. Dhar, former Secretary to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and a member of the Indian delegation at Simla, there was an understanding between Bhutto and Indira Gandhi that the LOC would gradually be endowed with the "characteristics of an international border".¹ Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) would be gradually incorporated into Pakistan and the LOC treated as a de facto frontier until the Kashmir issue was resolved. However, no official documentation is available to confirm this understanding.

3.7 Pakistan's interpretation of the Simla Agreement is different. At Simla, Pakistan was not interested in the settlement of the Jammu & Kashmir issue which had bedevilled Indo-Pak relations since 1947. Bhutto took credit for having secured both objectives of Pakistan mentioned in para 3.5 at a minimal price. With reference to Kashmir, Z.A. Bhutto, in his appeal to the Supreme Court of Pakistan against his death sentence, stated, "there is nothing in the Simla Agreement to prevent Pakistan from taking the dispute to the United Nations... the PPP Government therefore wanted to exhaust the bilateral avenues fully before returning to the United Nations. This conforms to the PPP outlook on the efficacy of the principle of bilateralism. The Kashmir dispute is still on the United Nations agenda. It would have been withdrawn if the Simla Agreement had closed the door on the United Nations recourse."²

3.8 Rafi Raza, who was Special Assistant to Z.A. Bhutto and a member of the Pakistani delegation to the Simla Conference, has written, "Pakistan had to sue for peace with India from a position of utter weakness. India was intent on dictating its terms... The task of Pakistani diplomacy was to minimise the price it had to pay".³ Raza further writes, "with regard to Jammu & Kashmir, India asked that the dispute should be settled 'here and now' by making the cease-fire line an international boundary... That was unacceptable to Pakistan even in its terrible straits. Pakistan acquiesced in the Indian refusal to return to the 1949 cease-fire line, but insisted on the insertion of the 'without prejudice' clause in the paragraph

requiring that the Line of Control resulting from the cease-fire line on December 17, 1971 shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognised position of either side".⁴ The insertion of the clause "without prejudice to the recognised positions" in Article 4(ii) is considered to be a major victory by Pakistani commentators and has been interpreted to mean that Pakistan was not debarred from seeking the resolution of the J&K problem with reference to the United Nations resolutions. Pakistan has stuck to this line ever since.

3.9 Abdul Sattar, presently Foreign Minister of Pakistan, echoed Rafi Raza's views in *Dawn*. He wrote, "The Indian offer of adjustment on the Line of Control...did not divert Pakistan from its single minded resolve to uphold the right of the Kashmiri people to self determination".⁵ Sattar also disagrees with the Indian interpretation that the Simla Agreement provides that bilateral differences must be resolved in a bilateral framework unless both sides agree to the contrary. Examining the purport of Article 1(ii) of the Simla Agreement in the light of the principles of the UN charter and, in particular, Article 1(iii) of the UN charter, Sattar comes to the conclusion, "Pakistan did not accept the Indian interpretation of so called 'bilateralism' then or later. Nor has it in fact allowed the Indian interpretation to affect its decisions to bring differences with India to the attention of the organs and agencies of the United Nations."⁶

Attempts at Internationalisation of the Kashmir Issue

3.10 Given its interpretation of the Simla Agreement, it is no surprise that Pakistan subsequently stepped up its efforts to internationalise the Kashmir issue and seek third party intervention, projecting the LOC as a temporary arrangement. The UN dimension of the Kashmir issue has been repeatedly highlighted by Pakistan. Speaking in the National Assembly on September 7, 1972, Pakistan's Education Minister Pirzada was forthright in stating that the Simla Agreement did not bind Pakistan to the withdrawal of UN observers from Kashmir.⁷ Bhutto, however, initiated the process of integration of the Northern Areas into Pakistan in violation of the UN reso-

lutions which do not permit any change in the status quo of the territory. In August 1972, the Pakistan government abolished the agency system in the Northern Areas and converted the then prevailing agencies into administrative districts. In December 1972, a new district of Diamer was created. In September 1974, the Hunza State was abolished and a new district of Ghanche created along with another district of Ghizr. On 25 September 1974, an official spokesman of the Government of India issued a statement describing Pakistan's unilateral action to abolish the Hunza State as "illegal". In 1975, Sheikh Abdullah and Indira Gandhi signed an agreement to normalise the situation in Jammu & Kashmir. Bhutto reacted adversely and on February 28, 1975 supported a hartal in Pakistan and POK.

3.11 Measures to integrate the Northern Areas into Pakistan could support Dhar's version of Bhutto's assurance to Indira Gandhi in 1972 that the LOC would be gradually turned into an international border. This is, however, only a hypothesis. Kashmir was raised by Pakistan at the UN after the Simla Agreement for the first time in 1973. In 1974 and 1975, there was no reference at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). However, in 1976 Pakistan, raising the issue at the UNGA, called for the "dispute" to be resolved in accordance with the "right of self-determination of the people of Jammu & Kashmir as recognised by UN Security Council resolutions...". In the same year, Pakistan raised the Kashmir issue at the Third Committee of the UNGA expressing support for the "struggle of many people of the third world for self-determination... including the people of Jammu and Kashmir". Reference to UN resolutions, self-determination and occasional references to the spirit of the Simla Agreement have been standard elements of Pakistan's statements at the UNGA. In 1982, Pakistan raised the issue at the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) session. Besides the UN, Pakistan has raised the Kashmir issue at other international fora also. For instance, General Zia himself used the Non-Aligned (NAM) Summit in Havana (September 6, 1979) and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Foreign Minister's Conference (March 1983) to highlight the Kashmir issue.

3.12 Pakistan's efforts to internationalise the Kashmir issue, coinciding with its involvement in the proxy war, were intensified in the 1990s. Realising the growing sensitivity of the international community to the human rights issue, Pakistan saw a fresh opportunity to draw international attention to the Kashmir issue. In this exercise Pakistan created Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to project its case in the matter and got involved with prominent international NGOs like Amnesty International, Asia Watch, etc. to whip up international opinion against India. This was coupled with a massive diplomatic and media drive against India on Kashmir. Pakistan has also used the OIC to get it to pass several anti-Indian resolutions on Kashmir. In a carefully orchestrated campaign, Pakistan aided and abetted terrorism and the proxy war. This inevitably resulted in human rights violations which it then cited at every conceivable forum to brand India as a major violator of human rights with a view to securing third party involvement in Kashmir. Self-determination for the people of Jammu & Kashmir became a catch word. At the 47th UNHRC session in 1991 and again at the 48th UNHRC session in 1992 Pakistan brought up the Kashmir issue under Agenda Item No. 9 on self-determination as well as under Agenda Item No. 12 on country situations. Pakistani presentations used the reports of Pakistani and foreign NGOs to decry alleged human rights violations by the Indian security forces in Kashmir.

3.13 The 49th UNHRC session in 1993 marked a watershed. Pakistan attempted to table a resolution against India on the Kashmir issue but had to abandon the move due to lack of support. Pakistan, however, did not give up. For the first time, it sought to move a resolution on Kashmir at the 1993 UNGA session in the Third Committee but eventually did not table it due to lack of support. Undeterred, in 1994 Pakistan went ahead and tabled a resolution at the UNHRC but at the last minute allowed itself to be persuaded not to press for action as it realised that it would not be able to get the required votes to ensure its passage. The draft resolution expressed concern at the situation in Jammu & Kashmir and called for the despatch of a fact-finding mission to the area. Had the resolution been passed, it would have effectively internationalised the J&K issue by making discussion on it incumbent at all future sessions.

In addition, it would have led to transmission of this issue to the UNGA and possibly to the revival of discussions at the UNSC. Furthermore, it would have given a fillip to insurgency in Jammu & Kashmir. Later, at the UNGA, Pakistan again tried to move a resolution in the First Committee through the OIC Contact Group but did not do so at the last minute for lack of support.

3.14 In 1996, the President of the UNSC initiated a move to simplify the Security Council's work. The President proposed that matters which had not been considered by the Security Council in the preceding five years should automatically be deleted. If this had been adopted, the Kashmir question would have been dropped from the Security Council's agenda. However, a number of countries including Pakistan and the Arab States protested against the move because of the standing resolutions on Kashmir and Palestine and the move was dropped. A compromise was reached that an annual summary statement would be issued by the Secretary General in January each year and the items to be deleted would be notified by the end of February, and an item would be retained on the agenda if a member country wished to keep it on the list.⁸ Pakistan has been annually notifying the Secretariat for retention of agenda items relating to "the India-Pakistan question", "the Hyderabad question", and "the Situation in India/Pakistan subcontinent". Consequently these three hoary items which have not been discussed since 1965 remain on the agenda of the Security Council.

3.15 Strategic equations in South Asia underwent a major change after Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979. The Afghan crisis transformed Pakistan into a "frontline" state of the West against the Soviet Union. This had important strategic implications for India as Pakistan became a recipient of major military and economic aid from the US. Robert Gates, the former CIA Director, mentions how the US-Pakistan covert cooperation on Afghanistan began well before the Soviet invasion. He writes, "The Carter administration began looking at the possibility of covert assistance to the insurgents opposing the pro-Soviet Marxist government of President Taraki at the beginning of 1979... Jimmy Carter [on July 3, 1979] signed the first finding to help the Mujahideen covertly; and [also] the provision, either unilaterally or through third

countries, of support to the Afghan insurgents, in the form of either cash or non-military supplies... Separately, the Pakistani intelligence service was pressing us to provide military equipment to support the expanding insurgency".⁹ Former US National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski recently confirmed that US had provided "some support to the Mujahideen before the [Soviet] invasion".¹⁰ The Afghan crisis strengthened General Zia's position both at home and internationally. Zia used this advantage to promote Islamisation at home, speed up Pakistan's covert nuclear programme, initiate a proxy war against India and harden Pakistan's stance on Jammu & Kashmir. General K.M. Arif, Chief of Staff to General Zia-ul-Haq, describes how the US was persuaded by Pakistan to overlook its nuclear programme. In September 1981, the United States agreed to provide economic and military assistance worth \$3.2 billion to Pakistan which insisted that it would "neither compromise on her nuclear programme nor accept any external advice on internal matters".¹¹ According to General Arif, the US Secretary of State, General Alexander Haig, gave an assurance that "Pakistan's nuclear programme would not become the linchpin of the new relationship".¹² Thus, Pakistan not only obtained US economic and military assistance but also tacit acceptance of its nuclear weapons programme.

3.16 In order to contain the rising Indo-Pakistan tensions following Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, Indira Gandhi took the initiative to clear misunderstandings with Pakistan on the Afghan issue. Pakistan tried to project that as a result of developments in Afghanistan, it faced a double jeopardy to its security from the east as well as west. This argument was being used to gain military and economic assistance from the West as well as legitimacy for its own military rule. India sought to reassure Pakistan that there was no threat to its security from the Indian side. Foreign Secretary R.D. Sathé visited Pakistan in January 1980 followed by the visit of Sardar Swaran Singh to Pakistan as Special Envoy in April. Indira Gandhi and Zia also met in Salisbury on 18 April. Foreign Policy Adviser Agha Shahi came to India from July 15-17. Pakistan, however, carried on with its anti-India tirade.

3.17 On September 15, 1981, a Pakistan Foreign Office statement announced Pakistan's formal acceptance of the US arms sales

package. Towards the end of this statement, it was said that Pakistan was ready to enter into immediate consultations with India for the purpose of exchanging mutual guarantees of "non-aggression and non-use of force" in the spirit of the Simla Agreement. The Pakistani offer ignored the fact that the Simla Agreement prohibited the use of force in bilateral relations and was therefore tantamount to a "No-War" agreement. In this sense the offer of a "No-War" pact was a diplomatic ploy used by Pakistan to cultivate the US. Thus began a flurry of diplomatic activity between the two countries. In January 1982, Foreign Minister Agha Shahi visited Delhi to discuss the "No-War" agreement. In response, Indira Gandhi instead suggested a Friendship and Cooperation Treaty with Pakistan. It was decided that the two sides would continue discussions on this issue. However, Pakistan did not leave the Kashmir issue alone. The Pakistani delegation to the UNHRC in Geneva raised the Kashmir and minorities issues. India reacted by postponing the scheduled talks on the proposed agreement. In June, Pakistan handed over a draft of an "Agreement on Non-Aggression, Renunciation of Force and Promotion of Good Neighbourly Relations". In August, an Indian counter-draft of the "Treaty on Peace, Cooperation and Friendship with Pakistan" was given. Subsequent discussions during 1982-83 did not register any significant movement. They got bogged down on the draft articles pertaining to "bilateralism" and military bases. In December, however, discussions were held on a "No-War" pact and a Friendship Treaty during the visit of Pakistan Foreign Secretary Niaz Naik to Delhi. The then External Affairs Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, visited Pakistan in June 1983. Pakistan reiterated its commitment to further discussions on the subject. Discussions were held in May 1984 when the Indian Foreign Secretary M.K. Rasgotra visited Islamabad. There was, however, no agreement on the two core articles in the Indian draft dealing with "bilateralism" and non-grant of military bases. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi took up the subject with General Zia-ul-Haq in December 1985. It was decided that the Foreign Secretaries should discuss the issue further. Discussions were held in January 1986 during Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari's visit to Islamabad. The differences on "bilateralism" and military bases could not be bridged. The joint statement

issued at the end of the talks said that the proposals would be examined further. During the visit of Foreign Secretary A.P. Venkateswaran in December 1986, further discussions were held but the differences persisted.

3.18 By this time, evidence of Pakistan's involvement in cross-border terrorism was mounting. It made little sense to negotiate a "No-War" Pact or "Peace, Cooperation and Friendship Agreement" when Pakistan was destabilising India by waging a proxy war. In June 1988, during Foreign Secretary level talks in Delhi, this was conveyed to Pakistan. The issue of a "No-War" pact has been dormant since then. However, it was once again mentioned by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in his address to the UNGA in 1997. He declared, "We believe that a just settlement of the Jammu & Kashmir dispute and progress on the issues of peace and security will usher in an era of amity and progress in South Asia. To facilitate the realisation of this objective, I offer today from this rostrum, to open negotiations on a treaty of non-aggression between Pakistan and India."¹³ Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad mentioned it again during his discussions with Indian Foreign Secretary K. Raghunath on October 16, 1998 in the first round of their composite dialogue. Significantly, no formal offer followed.

Rajiv-Benazir Interlude

3.19 The unexpected death of General Zia in an air crash in August 1988 and the subsequent holding on elections of November 17 led to the emergence of the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) as the single largest party in the Pakistan National Assembly. Since the PPP lacked an absolute majority, it was only after some suspense and drama, which reflected the unease felt by the Army, that Benazir Bhutto was finally sworn in as the Prime Minister of Pakistan on December 2. In this the Americans played a notable role. Before accepting her, the Army imposed certain conditionalities on Benazir Bhutto: that she would not challenge the role of the Army; the 8th Amendment which gave powers to the President to dismiss an elected Prime Minister and dissolve the National Assembly would not be abrogated; and, that the basic orientation of Pakistan's foreign and defence

policies crafted by Zia would not be changed. Benazir accepted all the conditions.¹⁴ Restoration of democracy after 11 years of Zia's military dictatorship and the coming to power of Benazir Bhutto raised great expectations in India of improvement in bilateral relations. Even before Benazir Bhutto was formally sworn in, Rajiv Gandhi asked Aftab Seth, then India's Consul General in Karachi, to meet her. He also despatched Ronen Sen, Joint Secretary in his own office, to call on her.¹⁵ He himself visited Pakistan in December to attend the 4th Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and held detailed bilateral discussions with Benazir Bhutto. Both leaders apparently established a warm rapport. Three important bilateral agreements were signed on December 31. These included an agreement on the prohibition of any attack against each others' nuclear installations and facilities, an agreement on cultural cooperation and an agreement on avoidance of double taxation on income derived from international air transport. It may be noted that the agreement on prohibition of any attack against nuclear installations and facilities was first proposed by Rajiv Gandhi to Zia in December 1985 during the latter's brief stopover in Delhi. This agreement was mooted as a Confidence Building Measure to reassure Pakistan that India had no intention of undertaking a pre-emptive strike against its nuclear installations.

3.20 The Rajiv-Benazir meeting of December 1988 set in train an intense bilateral dialogue between the two countries on a number of issues ranging from trade to Siachen. Several high level visits of officials including those of the Home, Defence and Foreign Secretaries were exchanged between India and Pakistan in the first half of 1989. These culminated in the first purely bilateral visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Pakistan on July 16-17 after a gap of nearly 30 years. However, during this visit, the differences in the respective approaches of the two countries to bilateral relations emerged. Benazir Bhutto, under domestic pressure, wanted Rajiv Gandhi to signal a change in India's position on Kashmir. Rajiv Gandhi, on the other hand, wanted to create a positive climate in bilateral relations by emphasising cooperation in diverse areas. The developments in Kashmir were seized upon by Pakistan to pressurise India. This added fresh tensions in Indo-Pak relations. Rajiv Gandhi

lost the general elections in 1989 and V.P. Singh became Prime Minister in November. Bilateral relations nosedived as Pakistan's position on Kashmir hardened. Benazir Bhutto described the struggle of the Kashmiris as a jihad and spoke of a thousand years of war against India. Thus, notwithstanding the euphoria following Benazir Bhutto's election as Prime Minister and the apparent rapport built up between her and Rajiv Gandhi, Indo-Pak relations soon fell back into the normal groove of mutual suspicion and hostility.

Siachen

3.21 The Siachen issue, whose origin has been discussed in Chapter 2, came on the bilateral agenda during Zia's time. It was discussed in six rounds of Indo-Pak Defence Secretary level talks during 1986-1992 and subsequently also by the Defence Secretaries of the two countries in November 1998 as a part of the composite Indo-Pak dialogue begun that year. During the fifth and sixth rounds of talks held in 1989 and 1992 respectively, both countries came close to an agreement on a package of measures on Siachen entailing ceasefire, establishment of a de-militarised zone and withdrawal of forces. Further progress could not be made as Pakistan was unwilling to agree to authenticate the ground positions held by the two sides. During the November 1998 talks, however, India insisted that before any package could be discussed, the ceasefire must be stabilised.

[.....]
[.....]
[.....].^{*16}

Focus on Kashmir

3.22 While the Indo-Pak dialogue continued intermittently, Pakistan was actively pursuing the second prong of its strategy towards India, namely, proxy war. It was becoming increasingly clear in the early eighties that the ISI was involved in supporting the Sikh

* Government Security Deletion.

militants in Punjab. While Zia projected the image of being a reasonable person desirous of normalising relations with India, he simultaneously sought to encourage separatism in Punjab and later in Kashmir. Subsequently, terrorism and subversion were extended to other parts of India.

3.23 By 1989, the law and order situation in J&K had deteriorated rapidly with Pakistan openly supporting the Kashmiri militants. The daughter of the then Indian Home Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, was kidnapped by Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) militants. The kidnappers freed her only after five prominent JKLF cadres were released in exchange. This was hailed as a victory by the euphoric militants. Several more violent incidents took place in the Valley. The Kashmiri Pandits began to flee the Valley after a spate of targeted killings. At this stage, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto sent Abdul Sattar as her Special Envoy to Delhi. This was followed by a visit by Foreign Minister Sahibzada Yakub Khan from January 21 to 23, 1990.

3.24 Yakub Khan met the then External Affairs Minister I.K. Gujral and Prime Minister V.P. Singh. In both these meetings he referred to the tense situation in the Valley and hinted that this situation could get out of control. The manner in which this message was conveyed led both V.P. Singh and I.K. Gujral to take Yakub Khan's demarche as an ultimatum.¹⁷ It was taken so seriously that the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs was convened informally to discuss the matter. Gujral was authorised to give a firm reply to Yakub Khan, which he did. The relevant records of the discussions are in Appendix B.¹⁸ Around this time, the Government of India was getting concerned at the heightened anti-India activity in POK and Pakistan. Volunteers were being incited to cross the LOC. Pakistan's High Commissioner, Bashir Babar, was summoned by Foreign Secretary S.K. Singh. Defence Secretary Naresh Chandra was also present in this meeting. The High Commissioner was cautioned that any illegal crossing of the LOC could "lead to escalation". He was also told that what was happening at the ground level did not square with the discussions Yakub Khan had had in India. The Foreign Secretary conveyed Indian concerns that "low level incitement at different levels could turn into large scale

activity".¹⁹ Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto added to tensions when she inaugurated a Solidarity Week in Kashmir on February 2. About two to three thousand people eventually crossed the LOC from Chakothi in POK. The Indian security forces opened fire killing six persons. Pakistan attempted to utilise this incident to arouse world opinion against India. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto visited Muzaffarabad on March 13 and delivered a highly emotional speech declaring the struggle in Kashmir to be a "holy jihad". Inciting the masses, she added, "Governor Jag Mohan Ko Bhag Bhag Mohan Bana Denge".²⁰

3.25 There was also concern in India at the failure of Pakistan to withdraw its forces at the end of the military exercise "Zarb-e-Momin". However, to defuse the tension, the Government of India permitted the Defence Attache of the US Embassy to visit the forward areas to satisfy himself that the Indian Army had not been deployed in an offensive posture. It was known to the Indian government at that time that Pakistan had attained the capacity to manufacture a nuclear device. Air Chief Marshal (Retd.) S.K. Mehra told the Committee that he was asked by the Prime Minister during the 1990 crisis whether it was possible for the Indian Air Force to stop a Pakistan nuclear air strike. He had replied that that could not be guaranteed and that the only answer was for India to have its own nuclear deterrent.²¹ In May 1990, the US sent a mission to India and Pakistan, headed by Robert Gates, then Deputy National Security Adviser, to assess the situation. The Americans, who had a fairly accurate knowledge of Pakistan's nuclear programme, were presumably worried that Indo-Pak tensions could spin out of control. The aim of the Gates mission appeared to have been to extract pledges of restraint from both sides. However, Gates did not make any reference to the nuclear issue during his visit to India.²²

3.26 Subsequently, in August 1990, Indian intelligence obtained information that Pakistan had developed a policy of using nuclear weapons as a first resort in case of war.²³ Some Western writers maintain that in 1990, Pakistan was contemplating the use of nuclear weapons against India. In October 1990, the US invoked the Pressler Amendment to cut off aid to Pakistan, thereby implicitly confirming Pakistan had nuclear explosive capability. Subsequently, Benazir

Bhutto in an interview to NBC on December 1, 1992 said that the bombs were assembled behind her back when she was in office. General Aslam Beg contradicted this and wrote in an article in *Defence Journal* that "Benazir Bhutto's allegation that she was kept in the dark about the nuclear programme during her last term contains no substance".²⁴ He further confirmed in this article that Pakistan had developed nuclear capability by 1987. In a recent article, Abdul Sattar, Agha Shahi and Air Chief Marshal Zulfikar Ali Khan have asserted that 1990 was one instance when Pakistan's nuclear capability deterred an Indian attack.²⁵ Therefore, it would appear that Pakistan's decision to launch a major proxy war in Kashmir could have been related to its achieving a nuclear deterrent capability.

Indo-Pak Dialogue

3.27 Notwithstanding this, the Indo-Pak dialogue continued intermittently. On May 28, 1990, India proposed a set of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) following which seven rounds of Foreign Secretary level talks were held between July 1990 and January 1994. The proposed CBMs were both military and non-military in character and included suggestions like introducing greater transparency in mutual military interactions, modalities to allay Indian concerns at Pakistan's support of terrorism, chemical and biological weapons, etc. In the sixth round of discussions (August 1992) Pakistan suggested talks on Jammu & Kashmir under Article 6 of the Simla Agreement. Pakistan wanted to give the highest priority to Kashmir in these talks, pushing every other issue to the background. The Indian response was that the Simla Agreement did not envisage compartmentalised and fragmented talks. Just one Article of the Simla Agreement could not be picked up selectively.

3.28 In January 1994, India and Pakistan exchanged non-papers on different aspects of the bilateral relationship. The six Indian non-papers dealt with CBMs, maintenance of peace and tranquillity along the LOC, Siachen, Sir Creek, the Tulbul Navigation Project and an Indo-Pak Joint Commission. The Indian non-paper on CBMs included, inter alia, proposals for an agreement on "no first use" or threat of use of nuclear capability against each other. The two Pak-

istani non-papers given in response dealt with a plebiscite in J&K and measures to create a climate for peaceful resolution of the J&K dispute. There was a big gap between the positions taken by the two countries on different issues in their respective non-papers. As a result, the Indo-Pak dialogue got aborted. It was at India's initiative that in 1997 interaction at the political level as well as an official dialogue was resumed. Prime Minister I.K. Gujral and his counterpart met four times during May 1997 and January 1998. The Foreign Secretaries of the two countries held three rounds of discussions. At the conclusion of the second round of Foreign Secretary level talks in Islamabad in June 1997, a joint statement was issued which identified the subjects for discussion.²⁶

3.29 The nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in May 1998 added an additional dimension to the Indo-Pakistan dialogue. The nuclear weapons of both sides now became overt. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met on July 29 in Colombo and again on September 23 in New York. Following the September meeting of the two Prime Ministers, a composite dialogue process between the two countries was begun. The joint statement of September 23, 1998 spoke of the need for a "peaceful settlement of all outstanding issues, including Jammu & Kashmir" for creating "an environment of durable peace and security". The Foreign Secretaries met in Islamabad on October 16-18, and discussed issues of peace and security including CBMs. In their meeting on October 17, Jammu & Kashmir was also discussed. The two sides reiterated their respective positions. In November, bilateral talks were held on subjects which had been identified earlier, namely, Siachen, the Tulbul Navigation Project, Sir Creek, economic and commercial cooperation, terrorism and drug trafficking, and promotion of friendly exchanges. Pakistan's main effort after the nuclear tests was to focus on Kashmir as the "core issue" in the bilateral relationship.

3.30 In February 1999, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee travelled to Lahore at the invitation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in a bid to normalise relations and begin a new chapter. The Lahore Declaration (February 21, 1999) was signed by the two Prime Ministers (Annexure 3.2). At Lahore both sides agreed to "intensify their efforts to resolve all issues, including the issue of Jammu and

Kashmir", and also reaffirmed their "condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations...". The Lahore Declaration reiterated the determination of both parties to implement the Simla Agreement "in letter and spirit". By taking into account the nuclear reality and agreeing to discuss Confidence Building Measures in the nuclear and conventional fields, the Lahore Declaration sought to update bilateral relations within the framework of the Simla Agreement. The Foreign Ministers of India and Pakistan met in Colombo on March 22 and reaffirmed their commitment to the Lahore process.²⁷ Despite regular interaction between the two sides in the post-Pokhran phase right up to the Lahore Declaration and beyond, there was no real expectation on the Indian side of any substantial improvement of bilateral relations as long as Pakistan pursued its one point agenda on Kashmir. There was some hope that the Lahore process might persuade the Pakistani leadership, particularly the civilian element, to pursue the path of cooperation with India. It was also noticed that in the post-Lahore period, Pakistan sent out a number of signals indicating its desire to move forward on several fronts. India reacted cautiously to these signals in the backdrop of past setbacks and Indian experience of Pakistan's diplomatic unreliability.²⁸

3.31 The Lahore Declaration was a sincere effort on India's part to tackle the difficult issues in the Indo-Pak relationship against the nuclear backdrop and was acclaimed the world over. The Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two Foreign Secretaries at Lahore provided for bilateral consultations on security concepts and nuclear doctrines in order to help confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields with an aim to avoid conflict²⁹ (Annexure 3.3). The Declaration also committed both countries to resolve outstanding issues including J&K through a composite and integrated dialogue. However, Pakistan did not give a chance to the Lahore Declaration. The Kargil intrusion constituted a cynical breach of the trust on which the Lahore process was posited. It is now clear that the Kargil aggression was under way even as the Pakistani Prime Minister was receiving the Indian Prime Minister at Lahore.

Pakistan's Proxy War in Kashmir

3.32 Destabilising India by supporting militancy in Punjab and Kashmir was a major plank of Zia's India policy. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Directorate is the major instrument for the implementation of this strategy. The capabilities of the ISI have been documented in numerous published sources.³⁰ Mohammad Yusuf and Mark Edkin's book *The Bear Trap*, and Haroon Habib's book, *Fateh*, clearly bring out the ISI involvement in guerilla warfare in Afghanistan. The case in the Supreme Court of Pakistan filed by Air Marshal Asghar Khan on the ISI's involvement in the politic of that country and distribution of laundered drug money to political parties on the eve of the 1990 elections is yet to be decided. Significantly, these sources also expose the nexus between the drug money generated in Afghanistan/Pakistan and the funding of militancy. Based on interrogations and seized documents, the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India produced a detailed report in 1994 on the activities of the ISI in Punjab, J&K, and the North-East. The Indian security forces have arrested a large number of Pakistan trained militants. The disclosures by these militants reveal that Pakistan is providing them ready sanctuary, arms training, and weapons to fight a proxy war in Kashmir.³¹

3.33 A part of the funds available to the ISI came through the diversion of foreign aid for Afghan resistance which was channelised through it. The Project Report of the Human Rights Watch on Arms (September 1994) and the CIA Report *Heroin in Pakistan: Sowing the Wind* (Appendix G) reveal that the ISI funds were generated through various sources including the sale of illegal drugs and narcotics. According to an article by Altaf Gauhar published in *Political and Business Weekly* (September 28, 1994), the Afghan war was substantially financed through the drug trade (Appendix G). Nawaz Sharif, in an interview to the *Washington Post* published on September 12, 1994, said that when he became the PM, the then Pakistan Army Chief, General Aslam Beg and the then DG-ISI, Lieutenant General Asad Durrani proposed to him a plan to use drug-generated money to support covert operations (Appendix G). The UN International Drug Control Programme estimated in

February 1994 that the Pakistani heroin industry had an annual turnover of \$2.5 billion. According to *Newsline* (December 1993) drug smuggling provided \$8 billion to Pakistan.³² Altaf Gauhar in his article quoted above writes that "some of the nationalised banks, particularly the Habib Bank, were used for laundering drug money" during Zia's time.³³ The Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), founded by Pakistani national Agha Hassan Abedi, collapsed in 1991. The Bank was heavily involved in laundering money and was used by arms dealers, drug traffickers and terrorists.³⁴ Part of the drug money is sent to Kashmir through a number of organisations based abroad including the World Kashmir Freedom Movement and the Kashmir American Council.

3.34 Even in 1979, evidence had accumulated that Pakistan was operating terrorist training centres to train Sikh militants. Between 1981 and 1987 three Indian aircraft were hijacked to Pakistan by Sikh extremists. The hijackers were provided assistance and shelter in Pakistan. After Lieutenant General Akhtar Abdul Rehman became DG-ISI in 1979, the ISI systematically began to instigate militancy in Punjab. Following Operation Blue Star in June 1984, Punjab terrorists were given training, money, arms and sanctuary in Pakistan. A number of Sikh militant leaders regularly visited Pakistan. The ISI also forged a plan to bring the Sikh and Kashmiri militants together.³⁵

3.35 With CIA assistance, the ISI gained rich experience in covert operations. In Afghanistan, both the CIA and ISI had cooperated to train Mujahideen in conducting special trans-border operations. This helped in developing infrastructural facilities for conducting cross-border terrorism. Some of the arms from the Afghan Mujahideen were later transferred to militants in India. These were first used in Punjab where trained Sikh militants were sent to carry out terrorist acts. When the morale of the Sikh militants started sagging in 1987, the ISI helped re-unite the warring militant groups which were breaking up due to in-fighting. At this stage, the ISI decided to extend the area of militancy to other parts of the country, particularly J&K. With a view to putting India in a strategically disadvantageous situation and encouraging its balkanisation, the ISI took the assistance of the JKLF in Kashmir. Later it established numerous

pro-Pakistan outfits to ensure complete control over militancy. The Human Rights Watch Arms Project Report of September 1994 notes, "the diffusion of vast quantities of weapons to militants in Punjab and Kashmir is linked to the so-called Afghan pipeline: massive, covert transfers of arms by the US CIA through Pakistan's ISI to the Afghan mujahidin after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979... [These] weapons have made their way into the hands of Sikh and Kashmiri militants".³⁶

3.36 In the mid-eighties, the ISI prepared a blueprint for starting a militant movement in J&K. According to Haroon Habib, the biographer of the late General Akhtar Abdul Rehman, the ISI had chalked out such a plan in 1984. Amanullah Khan, Chairman of JKLF, was consulted. The plan for J&K militancy was implemented in 1987 when Mohammad Rauf Khan, Senior Vice-President of the JKLF, was deputed to the Valley in 1987–88 to mobilise youth for arms training. It is estimated that about 15,000–20,000 persons exfiltrated to POK/Pakistan for arms training around this period. In 1988, India presented an aide-memoire to the Pakistan government about a number of Kashmiri youth being trained for subversive activities in Pakistan.

3.37 Between 1987 and 1989, Pakistani agencies depended upon the JKLF for fomenting militancy in Kashmir and later floated several pro-Pakistan militant groups like the Hizbul Mujahideen, Hizb-e-Islami, Allah Tigers, Al Umar, Harkat-ul-Ansar, etc., which were totally committed to securing Kashmir for Pakistan. From 1990 onwards the JKLF and other pro-Pak militants cooperated in their activities but later the ISI began to marginalise the JKLF as this group stood for independence. To achieve coordination of the pro-Pakistan groups, the Tehrik-e-Hurriyat-e-Kashmir was formed in 1990 and the Kul Jamaat Conference, also known as the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), in 1993.

3.38 Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism in Kashmir is well documented. The US State Department's 1995 annual report on *Patterns of Global Terrorism* referred to the violence by Kashmiri groups and said that "there are credible reports of official Pakistani support for militants fighting in Kashmir".³⁷ The 1996 report referred to the Pakistan based militant group "Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Front"

as claiming responsibility for bombings in New Delhi and Rajasthan. The report said, "Kashmiri militants, believed to be associated with the Pakistan based Harkat-ul-Ansar (HUA) may have killed the four remaining Westerners—one US citizen, two Britons, and one German—whom they captured in July 1995 while hiking near Srinagar".³⁸ The 1997 report described HUA as "an Islamic militant group based in Pakistan and operating primarily in Kashmir".³⁹ According to the State Department's report, the HUA was formed in October 1993 with the merger of the Harakat ul-Jihad al-Islami and Harakat-ul-Mujahidin. The HUA has been linked to the militant group Al-Farhan that kidnapped the five Western tourists in Kashmir. It is based in Muzaffarabad in POK. Its members are trained in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In an article that appeared in October 1997 in *Jane's Intelligence Review*, the origins and the activities of the HUA were analysed. The article stated that there was "no doubt that the complicity of the ISI is more than merely passive. The HUA owes its considerable arsenal in large measure to the generosity of the Pakistani Government, more specifically, its intelligence service".⁴⁰ The HUA figured in the list of banned terrorist organisations put out by the US State Department.

3.39 During 1990–94, Pakistan established 122 training camps for Kashmiri militants in Pakistan, POK and Afghanistan. Pakistan agencies continuously upgraded their training schedule and provided them with sophisticated weapons like AK series rifles, light machine guns, rocket launchers, etc. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, substantial amounts of weapons/explosives were recovered from militants by the Indian security forces. The weapons recovered during 1988–1999 included: 889 rocket launchers, 1,124 machine guns, 20,193 AK series rifles, 302 sniper rifles, 8,061 pistols/revolvers, 3136 thousand ammunition (assorted), 34,141 grenades, 3,047 rockets, 1,525 rocket boosters, 5,669 mines, 1,570 guns, 21,332 Kg explosives, 1,970 bombs, 314 grenade launchers, 127 mortars, and 2,118 WT sets.⁴¹

3.40 Terrorist violence included kidnappings, extortions, attacks on security forces, explosions and arson and destruction of property. During 1988–99 (March), according to the Ministry of Home Affairs statistics, 20,506 persons were killed in terrorist violence which,

inter alia, included 9,416 militants, 7,463 Muslims, 372 government officials, 151 politicians and 1,819 security personnel and others.⁴² Violence committed by the militants is wide ranging. Foreign nationals, women and children, Christian missionary institutions, Sikhs, members of the press, prominent personalities and government officials have been targeted (Appendix G).

3.41 In 1994, with militancy coming under pressure from the security forces, Pakistan started injecting an increasing number of foreign militants into J&K. These were mainly from Pakistan, POK, Afghanistan and some other Islamic countries.

3.42 Simultaneously, Pakistan sought to give the proxy war the colour of jihad or holy war. It was projected as if the entire Muslim world was concerned with the situation in Kashmir. The OIC and other international fora were utilised by Pakistan to condemn India on the issue of treatment of Muslims in India, and in J&K in particular.

3.43 Expatriate Kashmiri groups abroad were also utilised by Pakistan to focus international opinion on Kashmir. The Pakistan government constituted a Kashmir Liberation Cell for conducting anti-India propaganda abroad and for coordinating the activities of expatriate groups. Pakistani diplomatic missions in a number of countries were also used for promoting subversive activities in the Kashmir Valley.

3.44 Despite Pakistani efforts to sustain terrorism in Kashmir with the help of foreign mercenaries and sophisticated weaponry, there was a general improvement in the situation in the Valley after 1996 with the resumption of the political process in the State. The Indian security forces also adapted themselves to respond to the ISI strategy. The people of the region showed growing disenchantment with militancy. The situation in Srinagar improved as manifested in increased tourist traffic. The local population began to extend greater cooperation to the authorities in locating and identifying militants. According to Ministry of Home Affairs figures, the number of violent incidents in 1997 was 3,421 as compared to 5,523 in 1996. Killings also declined in 1997 (2,199) and 1998 (2,213) as compared to those in 1996 (2,858).⁴³ This was happening despite the fact that the number of foreign militants increased as reflected

in their numbers killed. Notwithstanding this, the ISI promoted the merger of militant outfits under a single command to pose a serious challenge to the security forces. The formation of this Shoora-e-Jehad by different pro-Pakistan militant tanzims was an effort in this direction. Simultaneously, Pakistan used the leaders to launch a campaign to discredit the Farooq Abdullah government which was attempting to secure greater autonomy for J&K within India. In 1997, the ISI sponsored the formation of the Tahriq-e-Jehad to enhance its control over the militant movement in Kashmir. Tahriq-e-Jehad has an overwhelming presence of foreign mercenaries. Fake Indian currency was also smuggled into the Valley. Encouraging militancy in other parts of India was also a part of the Pakistani game plan so that India's resources were stretched. The 1993 bomb blasts in Mumbai were the handiwork of the ISI. Pakistan's hand in instigating militancy in the North-East of India has been established.

3.45 The normalisation of the situation in the Valley did not suit Pakistan. There was no let up in waging proxy war against India. The ISI and other Pakistan government agencies continued with their offensive propaganda campaign against India. This was the situation on the eve of the Kargil aggression. Since Kargil, there has been an attempt to revitalise militancy in Kashmir.

Impact of Proxy War on the Indian Army

3.46 The proxy war launched by Pakistan was countered with the help of the Indian Army. This became necessary because the militants and foreign mercenaries were armed with rapid fire weapons, inert explosives, stand off weapons, sophisticated communication equipment and monetary resources both in real and fake Indian currency. Apart from being highly motivated, they were better trained and equipped as compared to the Indian para-military forces. In the initial stages, they exploited the alienation among sections of the local population consequent upon the political developments in the State between 1984 and 1987. There was also a political vacuum between 1990 and 1996 following the resignation of the Chief Minister, dissolution of the State Assembly and the climate of violence which precluded fresh elections and normal political activity

in the Valley. With the Indian Army's commitments in Sri Lanka, countering terrorism in Punjab and insurgency in the North-East, successive Army Chiefs were not in a position to consider adopting a pro-active posture in dealing with the large scale infiltration into Kashmir as in 1965. In the opinion of one former Army Chief, India did not have adequate margins to sustain a pro-active posture in regard to the proxy war after 1989. Their views and those of former DGMOs may be seen at Appendix B.⁴⁴

3.47 The Army had to adapt itself to deal with terrorism. Accordingly, its deployment and role was radically different to what it would have been were its posture limited to defence of the borders. Deployment in counter-terrorist operations disrupts the normal training programme of the Army and adversely impacts on its mindset and state of readiness.

3.48 The 15 and 16 Corps are normally deployed in J&K and face two Pakistani army corps. Pakistan's Army Reserve North is also deployed close to this area. The counter-terrorism role given to the Army is, therefore, over and above its normal role. This tends to create an asymmetry vis-à-vis the Pakistani forces. This is no accident. A cross-border proxy war was deliberately designed by Pakistan to offset the perceived overall conventional superiority of the Indian Army (Appendix B).⁴⁵

3.49 It was found necessary to induct additional Army formations into J&K to deal with the increasingly professionalised infiltrators sent across the LOC, many of them Pakistani ex-servicemen or veterans of the Afghan war, highly motivated through extremist religious conditioning. The arc of terrorism was extended with foreign mercenaries operating in forested and rural areas. Moreover, from 1995 onwards these elements were equipped with highly sophisticated weapons and equipment. [.....].*

3.50 Pakistani Generals had been talking about fatigue setting in in the Indian Army because of its continuous deployment in counter-terrorist operations and its declining efficiency as a fighting force in consequence. Comparisons were made with the American

* Government Security Deletion.

forces in Vietnam which suffered a decline in their efficiency after their strength exceeded half a million. Even in the telephonic conversations between Lieutenant General Aziz and General Musharraf there is a pejorative reference to the "crawling of the 6th Division" (Appendix D). Lieutenant General Javed Nasir, former head of the ISI, wrote in early 1999 that "the Indian Army is incapable of undertaking any conventional operations at present, what to talk of enlarging conventional conflict".⁴⁶

3.51 The Pakistani Army Chief in a recent speech emphasised that with both countries acquiring nuclear weapons, the possibility of a conventional war was virtually zero, but that of a proxy war had increased.⁴⁷ Characteristically, he averred that Pakistan should be prepared for a threat of increased proxy war from India. This should be interpreted as notice that Pakistan itself was going to rely increasingly on proxy war. The Pakistani Army had waged a proxy war for nine years without the Indian Army being in a position to take meaningful pro-active measures as in 1965. While both Indian political leaders as well as Indian Army Chiefs have tended to discount the nuclear factor in this situation, the Pakistanis had articulated the view that their nuclear capability was the compelling factor in ensuring avoidance of escalation by India. On the Indian side, it had been made abundantly clear that the Indian Army has not for sometime enjoyed a punitive edge over the Pakistan Army to adopt an effective pro-active strategy. In this situation, the aggressor has the advantage of choosing both the strategy as well as timing. While India can live with the Line of Control and sees no reason for internationalisation of the Kashmir issue, Pakistan is very keen to alter the status quo. An eminent Pakistani writer, Altaf Gauhar, has suggested that contingency planning for a Kargil operation was formulated as far back as 1987 during the period of General Zia-ul-Haq but the plan was vetoed by the then Foreign Minister Sahibzada Yakub Khan as being militarily untenable and internationally and politically indefensible.⁴⁸ Reports emanating from Pakistan after Kargil suggest that the plan might have been revived sometime in 1997 and preparations, including the reconnaissance at Yaldor in 1997, may have been part of the build-up. Other versions speak of units of the Northern Light Infantry (NLI) being trained in high

altitude warfare during 1997–98. If these accounts are to be accepted, then the intrusion was possibly politically driven. That may also explain the subsequent bitterness of the Pakistan Army at Nawaz Sharif's attempts to distance himself from the controversy. At present, on the basis of the material available with the Committee, this remains a hypothesis.

Notes

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3. Rafi Raza (ed.), *Pakistan in Perspective: 1947–1997*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1997, p. 110.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 111–12.
5. Abdul Sattar, "Simla Agreement: Denouement", *Dawn*, July 4, 1995.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Satish Kumar, *The New Pakistan*, Vikas Publishers, New Delhi, 1978, p. 243.
8. UN Security Council Document No. S/1996/704 dated August 29, 1996.
9. Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996, pp. 143–46.
10. "US Aided Afghan Rebels before Soviet Action", *The Indian Express*, December 13, 1999, quoting an Agence France Presse Report.
11. General K.M. Arif, *Working with Zia: Pakistan's Power Politics 1977–1988*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1995, p. 341.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Address by Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan, to the 52nd Session of the UN General Assembly, September 22, 1997.
14. J.N. Dixit, *Anatomy of a Flawed Inheritance: Indo-Pak Relations 1970–74*, Konark Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1995, p. 111.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
16. ROD with B. Raman (November 5, 1999), former Special Secretary, R&AW.
17. I.K. Gujral, in his meeting with the Kargil Review Committee, recalled that Yakub Khan was very melodramatic and was reading from a

- prepared note. He used terms like "fire would be spitting from the skies and there would be a holocaust" (in Urdu).
18. ROD with I.K. Gujral, former Prime Minister (September 24, 1999); ROD with V.P. Singh, former Prime Minister (October 9, 1999); ROD with B.G. Deshmukh, former Cabinet Secretary (October 26, 1999).
 19. Meeting between Foreign Secretary, Defence Secretary and the Pakistan High Commissioner on January 25, 1990.
 20. J.N. Dixit, *op. cit.*, p. 129–30.
 21. ROD with Air Chief Marshal (Retd.) S.K. Mehra (October 18, 1999).
 22. ROD with I.K. Gujral (September 24, 1999), and ROD with B.G. Deshmukh (October 26, 1999).
 23. R&AW UO dated August 8, 1990. Attached as **Annexure 10.1**.
 24. General Mirza Aslam Beg, "Nuclear Programme and Political Ramblings", *Defence Journal*, Vol. XIX, No. 11–12, 1993.
 25. Agha Shahi, Zulfiqar Ali Khan and Abdul Sattar, "Securing Nuclear Peace", *The International News*, October 5, 1999.
 26. For a chronology of Indo-Pak relations from February 1997 to May 1999, see **Annexure 3.5**.
 27. The joint statement issued on March 19, 1999 after the meeting of External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz referred to the "urgency of taking concrete measures" for intensification of the "composite and integrated dialogue process". The two sides agreed to resume the dialogue in May 1999. For the text of the joint statement, see **Annexure 3.6**.
 28. ROD with K. Ragunath, Foreign Secretary (October 9, 1999).
 29. Memorandum of Understanding, February 21, 1999, signed by the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan on behalf of their respective Governments and in the presence of the two Prime Ministers (**Annexure 3.3**).
 30. For details see Mohammad Yousaf and Mark Adkin, *The Bear Trap: Afghanistan's Untold Story*, Jang Publishers, Lahore, 1992; The CIA Report, *Heroin in Pakistan: Sowing the Wind*, September 1992; Altaf Gauhar, "ISI and its Role in Politics", *Nation*, June 3, 1994, *The Narco Barons*, May 1993, a *Newsline* (Pakistan) publication.
 31. IB report on *Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)*, April 1994, p. 33.
 32. Quoted in JIC Paper No. 6/94 on *Internal Security Threats: Likely Future Trends*, p. 29.
 33. Altaf Gauhar's article in *Politics and Business*, September 28, 1994.
 34. See Jonathan Beaty and S.C. Gwynne, *The Outlaw Bank: A Wild Ride into the Secret Heart of BCCI*, 1993.

35. JIC Paper No. 8/94 on *Anti-India Activities of the ISI on the Indian Sub-Continent*, p. 16.
36. Human Rights Watch on Arms Project Report, *India: Arms and Abuses in Indian Punjab & Kashmir*, September 1994, Vol. VI, No. 10, available on www.hrw.org/campaigns/kashmir/1994.
37. Quoted in *The Proxy War Still Continues*, Government of India, 1999, p. 28.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
40. Roger Howard, "Wrath of Islam: The HUA Analysed" in *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vols. 9 and 10, October 1997.
41. *Profile of Terrorist Violence in Jammu & Kashmir*, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 1999, p. 232.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 230–32.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
44. See RODs with Lieutenant General (Retd.) V.R. Raghavan (September 27, 1999); Lieutenant General I.K. Verma (September 28, 1999); General (Retd.) Shankar Roychowdhury (October 5, 1999); Lieutenant General (Retd.) Satish Nambiar (October 6, 1999).
45. ROD with B. Raman (November 5, 1999).
46. Lieutenant General Javed Nasir, "Calling the Indian Army Chief's Bluff", *Defence Journal*, February–March, 1999.
47. A.R. Siddiqui, "COAS Views on Relations with India", *Nation*, April 29, 1999, reproduced in *POT*, Pakistan series, May 19, 1999, pp. 1692–94.
48. Altaf Gauhar, *Nation*, September 5 1999, reproduced in *POT*, September 19, 1999, pp. 3457–58 (Annexure 3.4).

Chapter 4

Defence of Kargil: Operational Management by the Army

Threat Assessment and Tasking

4.1 The primary role of the Army is to safeguard the national borders against external aggression and to protect its integrity and sovereignty. The threat assessment for any theatre of operation is made at the highest relevant level and covers not only the total forces available with the adversary in a particular sector but also the forces that he can specifically apply within the limitations of his logistic capability and the terrain. It is on the basis of this assessment that formations are tasked and provided the necessary resources.

Execution

4.2 The execution of the task involves applying the resources on ground, preparation of defences, rehearsals for the appreciated contingencies and stocking of supplies, etc. Once the defences are ready, the "routine" in defence is followed which includes patrolling, domination of no man's land, surveillance of the enemy, further improvement of defences and the communication infrastructure, camouflage and concealment, and development of a tactical intelligence network. The Commanders are responsible for the defence and development of their area to its full military potential. It is incumbent on them to execute the task within the allotted resources. There is no "looking

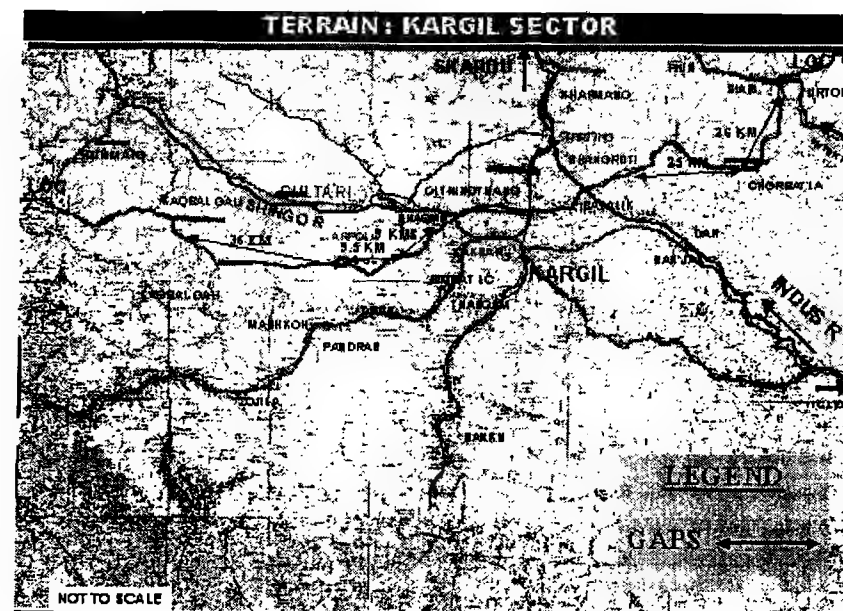
back" over their shoulders unless they have fully and effectively utilised all resources placed at their command. While they may request additional resources, the judgement about and priorities in the allocation of resources is entirely that of the higher commander. Non-availability of additional resources requested cannot be a justification for a military commander not to fulfil his allotted task to the best of his ability. In discharging the responsibility of defending their area, all commanders are required to respond to a developing situation without waiting for further directions from any higher level. In doing so, they are required to keep the higher headquarters continuously informed.

4.3 Intelligence Acquisition: A prerequisite for successful defence is complete knowledge of local terrain conditions as well as detailed information about the enemy's forces. This includes their force deployment, logistic build up (including communications) and equipment and material changes taking place in their area of influence. Prior to the commencement of hostilities the military in India is primarily dependent for its intelligence on civilian intelligence agencies, particularly R&AW. It is supplemented by intelligence collected by Divisional Intelligence Units (DIU), Intelligence and Field Security Units (IFSU) and from signal intelligence. In advanced countries, the armed forces are supported by integrated defence intelligence agencies with adequate resources to carry out a significant portion of this task during peace time.

4.4 Training for War: Execution of the task requires that the formation, units and troops are well trained for the purpose. Commanders at all levels plan and impart training to all those under their command. Plans are validated and rehearsed in operational training. Formations/units go through periodic operational rehearsals, including exercises involving "enemy troops" represented by nominated formations/units from another sector. Tactical exercises are conducted. Commanders down to the platoon/section level are taken on ground and made to react to hypothetical situations. War games and sand model discussions are planned to exercise higher commanders on a given situation and also to validate operational plans.

Operational Management: Kargil Sector

4.5 Terrain and Climate: The Kargil sector extends over a frontage of 168 km along the LOC from Kaobal Gali to Chorbat La. The average height of peaks along the mountain ridges is approximately 5,000 metres. The area is devoid of any vegetation and remains covered with a thick layer of snow from November to April/May. There are two identifiable approaches to the sector from the Pakistan side; these are along Indus and Shingo Rivers. From Gilgit and Skardu, roads running along these rivers provide the two axes to Gultari-Shaqma via the Burzil Bai Pass (which closes during winter) and Olthingthang via Kharmang, respectively (see Map at Appendix H). A lateral road Shirting-Shaqma connects these two axes. The area in general is extremely inhospitable. It is characterised by forbiddingly precipitous mountains, extreme cold, glaciated valleys and the absence of roads and tracks. Therefore, local conditions impose severe limitations on the conduct of any sustained large size operations.



4.6 Weather Conditions 1998–99: Inputs received from the Director-General, India Meteorological Department, Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Meteorology) in Air Headquarters, and the Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE), DRDO indicate that snow came late in the winter of 1998–99 and the total snowfall was less than that of the previous years (Appendix C). The quantum of precipitation was below normal at many posts but close to normal at others. The amount of precipitation was below normal during November–December 1998, close to normal in January–February 1999 and above normal in March 1999. Although overall snowfall during the winter of 1998–99 was less than that in the previous years, heavy snowfall during March 1999 resulted in a higher accumulation of snow as compared to the earlier years, particularly in the valleys. This made the area highly avalanche-prone in March and early April 1999 rendering movement difficult and hazardous in the valleys. However, due to above-normal temperatures from April 1999 onwards, the snow dissipated faster in the higher reaches as a result of which Zojila Pass opened earlier.

4.7 Winter Posture: A winter posture is adopted to reduce logistic problems and to avoid casualties due to hazardous conditions created by heavy snow and avalanches. The decision to adopt the winter posture is based on prevalent degrees of difficulty in the movement and maintenance of troops and not on any fixed date. The implications of adopting a winter posture are as follows:-

(a) *Vacation of Hazardous Posts:* Certain posts, the year-round holding of which could expose troops to the risk of loss of life due to extreme weather conditions and avalanches, are earmarked for vacation. These are called winter vacated posts and are vacated before maintenance routes become dangerous.

(b) *Winter Cut-Off Posts:* Permanent posts within the various defended areas/localities which it is operationally necessary to keep under occupation throughout the year, but whose routine maintenance support is not possible during winter months due to snow conditions, are called "Winter Cut-off Posts". These posts are stocked up (level of stocking maintained is for 210

days) during the summer months so that they can sustain themselves without re-supply for the period they are cut-off.

(c) *Reduction in Manpower:* Due to the reduced threat in winter, the reduction in the total number of posts held and reduced patrolling activity, a larger number of personnel are sent on leave and for courses. This reduces manpower availability during winter as well as the administrative load in these high altitude areas.

Defensive Lay Out and Resource Allocation

4.8 Command and Control: Given the nature of the terrain, climatic conditions and threat assessment, it had been historically accepted that the sector does not require more than an infantry brigade for its defence. 121 Infantry Brigade has been responsible for the defence of this sector ever since March 1969. It functioned initially directly under command of Headquarters 15 Corps; but after the 1971 operations, it was placed under Headquarters 3 Infantry Division located at Leh. From October 1985 to June 1991, owing to the developments in the Siachen sector, an additional divisional headquarters (28 Infantry Division) with one brigade was inducted into this sector and two brigades already in the Kargil and Siachen sectors were placed under its command. Later in mid-1991, when 28 Infantry Division was moved out of this sector to Kupwara for counter-insurgency operations, 121 Infantry Brigade reverted under the command of 3 Infantry Division. During the entire period from March 1969 to April 1999, the quantum of troops under 121 Infantry Brigade for conventional defence of the sector remained unchanged.

4.9 Deployment Profile: The Kargil sector is sub-divided into the Dras, Kaksar, Channigund and Batalik sub-sectors. Each of these sub-sectors had been allotted to an infantry battalion (121 Infantry Brigade had four infantry and one BSF battalion under command). Defences held in these sub-sectors are adequate for effective denial of approaches through the Indus and Shingo valleys. Certain areas in the sector have particularly difficult terrain and are not viable for any meaningful and sustained offensive operations by the enemy.

These had been left as unheld gaps. These gaps are at Mashkoh Valley (36 km), Marpola to Bimbat LC (9.5 km), Bimbat LC to Kaksar (9 km) and Yaldor (25 km from Batalik to Chorbat La) (Inset map, para 4.5 and Appendix H). These gaps had no force allocation. However, after 1993, when an abortive infiltration attempt was made by Pakistan-supported militants through the Mashkoh Valley, the Army felt that there was need to deploy additional forces during the summer months for countering a possible infiltration threat in the Mashkoh/Dras and Batalik sectors. Consequently, it was decided to allocate an additional battalion each from outside the brigade resources to cover these two areas during the summer months. These battalions were deployed to block all possible infiltration routes. They also carried out intensive patrolling of the area during the summer months. From 1997 onwards there was increased activity in this sector, marked by heavy artillery fire. The magnitude of these exchanges rose two-fold in 1997 and three-fold in 1998. In 1998, reports indicated training of an increased number of militants in the Northern Areas and likelihood of their infiltration through the Mashkoh Valley. HQ 15 Corps therefore decided to raise the level of deployment in Dras and Mashkoh areas during the summer of 1999 from one battalion to a brigade with two battalions. This task was accordingly assigned to HQ 70 Infantry Brigade which had moved to Dras in end-April 1999.

Collection of Intelligence and Patrolling Policy

4.10 Intelligence Collection: The main source of intelligence for 121 Infantry Brigade was the Intelligence Summaries received from higher headquarters which took into account information received at Army/Command/Corps/Divisional Headquarters and all other sources. The Brigade also received information directly from local representatives of civilian agencies, its own Brigade Intelligence Team (BIT) and the troops in contact. Details of the intelligence framework and flow of information are given in Chapters 6 and 7. The Kargil Sector had one BIT functioning directly under Headquarters 121 Infantry Brigade. The BIT worked in conjunction with the local population and troops deployed in the forward areas. However,

during winter, due to snow and avalanche conditions from December to April/May, the BIT and other intelligence sources became dormant and ineffective.

4.11 [.....].*

4.12 [.....].*

4.13 Conduct of Patrolling

(a) *Summers:* During the summer months, additional forces were inducted into the Dras-Mashkoh Valley and Yaldor (Batalik) areas as part of the summer accretion to hold and deny infiltration routes to the enemy. One additional battalion each was deployed in these two areas and they carried out regular patrolling. [.....].*

(b) *Winters:* During winters, as soon as movement and patrolling became near impossible due to heavy snow conditions, the additional battalions withdrew from the area. After their withdrawal, no patrolling was carried out in the Mashkoh Valley and Batalik. The period during which patrolling was not carried out in the winter of 1998-99 is as under:

Sector	From	To	Gap
Mashkoh	January 10, 1999	March 30, 1999	80 Days
Yaldor	February 1, 1999	April 5, 1999	64 Days
Kaksar	March 3, 1999	April 11, 1999	38 Days

Winter Air Surveillance Operations (WASO)

4.14 Winter Air Surveillance Operations (WASO) are carried out in the form of helicopter reconnaissance over inhospitable and difficult areas that cannot be covered by foot patrols. These are planned

* Government Security Deletion.

in advance and a local ground force representative, namely company/battalion/brigade commander or a staff officer from the formation, is always aboard these sorties. This is to ensure that a person with knowledge of the ground is available to observe changes. The Army Aviation Squadron based at Leh flew WASO missions in the Mashkoh Valley sector. The missions were flown as per the operations directive issued by HQ 15 Corps (Appendix C). The Mashkoh Valley sector was categorised as a Priority-IV Sector (which meant a sortie only once in three weeks). No WASO sorties were planned east of Kargil. Headquarters 15 Corps letter laying down the sector details and routes to be followed is placed in Appendix C. A total of six dedicated WASO sorties were flown for the period November 10, 1998 to May 4, 1999. Of these six missions, four had Commander 121 Infantry Brigade on board, and the remaining two had GOC 3 Infantry Division on board. During the same period, five operational reconnaissance sorties were also flown in various areas, which by the very nature of their task also enabled the Commanders to observe activities on the ground. Two operational reconnaissance sorties had Commander 121 Infantry Brigade on board. In addition, 13 training sorties also operated in the area which carried out visual observation of the area as part of the training. In all, a total of 116 flying hours were utilised for all these sorties during the winter of 1998–99. Of all the sorties flown, only one dated March 31, 1999 detected certain footprints on the snow in the Mashkoh sector. Subsequent operational reconnaissance sorties were flown over the area to confirm this report but did not yield any results. WASO patrols suffer from certain shortcomings. Its sound level gives warning of its impending arrival and enables intruding persons to take cover or camouflage themselves. Because of vibrations, observation through binoculars is not very effective. There are also peacetime restrictions on the height at which the helicopter flies and the distance it has to keep from the LOC. WASO patrols are mostly intended for use against infiltration and consequently focus on the valleys. This prevented effective observation of areas on the other sides of the ridges. Overall, WASO patrols in the last two years have not thrown up any clues worth following up.

Chapter 5

Kargil Intrusion Reconstructed

"In War, the Abnormal is Normal, and Uncertainty is Certain"
(From 3 Infantry Division)

5.1 There has understandably been much speculation about the why, when and how of the Kargil intrusion. An effort has been made to address these issues in the ensuing paragraphs which dwell upon the motives and assumptions which might have led Pakistan to engage in this exercise and which also seek to assess the precise nature of the Pakistani plan and the detailed time frame and mode of its execution. In so doing an effort has also been made to analyse India's response in the immediate aftermath of the unveiling of the Pakistani intrusions.

Pakistan's Motivations and Assumptions

5.2 Pakistani writings reveal the following as the likely motivations for undertaking the Kargil intrusions.

5.3 *Politico-Strategic Motives*

- (a) To internationalise Kashmir as a nuclear flash point requiring urgent third party intervention;¹
- (b) To alter the Line of Control (LOC) and disrupt its sanctity by capturing unheld areas in Kargil;² and
- (c) To achieve a better bargaining position for a possible trade-off against the positions held by India in Siachen.³

5.4 Military/Proxy War Related Motives

- (a) To interdict the Srinagar-Leh road by disrupting vital supplies to Leh,⁴ [.....].*
- (b) To outflank India's defences from the South in the Turtok and Chalunka sectors through unheld areas thus rendering its defences untenable in Turtok and Siachen;
- (c) To give a fillip to militancy in J&K by military action designed to weaken the counter-insurgency (CI) grid by drawing away troops from the Valley to Kargil. It would also give a boost to the morale of the militants in the Valley;⁵
- (d) To activate militancy in the Kargil and Turtok sectors and open new routes of infiltration into the Valley; and
- (e) To play to the fundamentalist lobby and the Pakistani people by bold action in Kashmir which continues to remain a highly emotional issue.**

Pakistan's Assumptions

5.5 The Kargil intrusions are likely to have been undertaken by Pakistan on the basis of the following assumptions:

- (a) Its nuclear capability would forestall any major Indian move particularly across the international border involving use of India's larger conventional capabilities. It appears to have persuaded itself that nuclear deterrence had worked in its favour from the mid-1980s.⁶
- (b) Confidence that the international community would intervene at an early stage, leaving it in possession of at least some of its gains across the LOC, thereby enabling it to bargain from a position of strength.

* Government Security Deletion.

** Motives at (b), (d) and (e) above have been assessed by Army Headquarters based on Pakistani plans and actions during the Kargil conflict (see Operational Appraisal Kargil Sector of Army Headquarters at Appendix F).

- (c) China would adopt a favourable posture in the light of its perceived anti-Indian stand in the post-Pokhran II period.
- (d) A weak and unstable government in India would be incapable of a quick and firm response and would not be inclined to open a new front.
- (e) The Indian Army would not be able to respond adequately due to its heavy CI commitment in J&K.⁷
- (f) Due to an inadequacy of resources east of Zojila, India would not be able to react effectively against the intrusions before Zojila opened for traffic by end May/early June.
- (g) The Indian Army would not be able to muster adequate forces with high altitude training and acclimatisation to fight on the Kargil heights.
- (h) Rapidly returning normalcy in J&K needed to be thwarted in order to sustain its "cause".⁸

Pakistan's Kargil Plan

Genesis of the Plan

5.6 Pakistan has long had plans to intrude into Kargil. Altaf Gauhar's disclosure that a plan for an operation in the Kargil sector existed in 1987 and was nearly put into effect at that time has been covered in Chapter 3.⁹ The context in which the plan was formulated is not clear. However, it is possible that it was originally motivated by the desire to avenge Siachen. Subsequently, it was reportedly twice presented to the then Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, who rejected it outright.¹⁰ It appears to have been further refined by General Pervez Musharraf when he was Director-General of Military Operations (DGMO) in 1993-95.¹¹ However, it is reported that General Jehangir Karamat, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) in 1996-98 did not support this plan;¹² it has thus been speculated that this might have been one of the reasons behind his dismissal (*Times of India* dated September 13, 1999 quoting the Pakistani newspaper, *Nawa-i-Waqt*). General Karamat has, however, reportedly denied that the plan came up for his consideration.

5.7 General Pervez Musharraf was appointed COAS in October 1998 superseding two others. A protege of General Zia, he is a Mohajir and has experience of unconventional operations, using regular troops masquerading as Mujahideen in Afghanistan and "has longstanding links with several Islamic fundamentalist groups."¹³ He is also seen to be aggressive and ambitious and is considered to be one of the most experienced experts in mountain warfare in the Pakistan Army and very visibly displays his "commando" image even now. He has had two tenures in Pakistan's Special Services Group (SSG) including raising of an SSG Group in 1987 at Khapalu which is the key support base opposite the Siachen and Kargil sectors. On appointment as COAS, he undertook a major reshuffle in the Army placing trusted officers in the key positions of Chief of General Staff (CGS), Lieutenant General Mohammad Aziz Khan and General Officer Commanding (GOC) 10 Corps, Lieutenant General Mahmud Ahmad. These two officers played a pivotal role in ousting the Nawaz Sharif Government on October 12, 1999 and placing General Musharraf in power. There is a strong indication that the assumption of office by General Musharraf as COAS was an important factor in Pakistan's decision to go ahead with this plan. His decision might have been motivated by his perception about the Indian Army which clearly emerges from his pronouncement on October 29, 1998, when he addressed Pakistani troops of Kharian-Mangala garrisons stating, "Don't be carried away by the rhetoric of the Indians whose armed forces are totally exhausted and whose morale is at its lowest".

5.8 The plan for the Kargil intrusions was based on stealth and deception. This is reflected in the telephonic conversation between General Musharraf and Lieutenant General Aziz (transcript of "Tapes" given at Appendix D) on May 26, 1999 wherein it is obvious that the plan was kept a closely held secret among a small coterie. The plan mainly involved the use of troops deployed from within the sector under the Force Commander Northern Area (FCNA), thus obviating the need for any large scale movement of forces from outside the area which would have made deception and surprise that much more difficult. Another advantage of utilising troops from within the Northern Areas, namely Northern Light Infantry

(NLI) troops, was that they were fully acclimatised. The plan entailed the occupation of a series of high features across the LOC in the Kargil sector in the unheld gaps in between the defended positions (Appendix H), which were not occupied and where patrolling was difficult in winter due to the hazardous terrain and extreme climatic/snow conditions. It was presumably envisaged that a bridgehead established across the LOC on the heights above Kargil would enable it to create a "new LOC" and also help to internationalise the Kashmir issue. Meanwhile, there would be opportunities to cut off the Kargil-Ladakh sectors by interdicting NH-1A with far reaching political, diplomatic and military implications.

5.9 Force level under Force Commander Northern Area (FCNA) in April 1998 as given by Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) was 13 Infantry Battalions (12 Infantry Battalions under FCNA and one Infantry Battalion ex-19 Infantry Division in location at Gilgit). The ORBAT (Order of Battle), thereafter, issued on June 1, 1999 by R&AW, showed that there were only 10 Infantry Battalions under the FCNA. No change in the location of battalion ex-19 Infantry Division at Gilgit was indicated thereby suggesting that this battalion was still there. Consequent to certain discussions between R&AW and DGMI in the next few days, R&AW modified its position and intimated that there were two more battalions under the FCNA over and above the 10 Infantry Battalions shown in the June 1999 ORBAT. It said that these had been erroneously missed out from the June 1999 ORBAT. (This implied that there continued to be 13 Infantry Battalions in the FCNA region including the Battalion ex-19 Infantry Division at Gilgit.) The Committee has examined R&AW ORBAT dated April 1998 and the amended ORBAT of June 1999 and tried to correlate these ORBATs with the information now available on likely Pakistani ORBAT in FCNA region based on forward contact of own troops during initial stages of intrusion, captured diaries/documents and POW interrogation reports. This examination shows that prior to Pakistan launching Operation BADR, there were in fact 15 battalions in the FCNA region and not just 13—an accretion of two Infantry Battalions over and above what had been indicated by R&AW in its amended June 1999 ORBAT. It also emerges that during late 1998/early 1999

two Infantry Battalions already under the FCNA had moved up from rear locations and deployed forward within the FCNA region. The ORBAT of Pakistan forces in the FCNA region as intimated by R&AW in April 1998 and June 1999 and the position as assessed by the Committee is given at **Annexure 5.2**.

5.10 Thus, the force level under FCNA prior to the Kargil operation as assessed by the Committee was as follows (disposition given in the map at **Annexure 5.3**):

- (a) **323 Infantry Brigade (Dansam):** 4 Infantry Battalions, 7 fire units (each fire unit is an artillery battery consisting of six guns).
- (b) **62 Infantry Brigade (Skardu):** 5 Infantry Battalions, 7 fire units.
- (c) **80 Infantry Brigade (Minimarg):** 5 Infantry Battalions, 11 fire units, two wings of Chitral Scouts.
- (d) **Reserve:** One Infantry Battalion at Gilgit and elements of the Chitral and Bajaur Scouts.

5.11 A scrutiny of various intelligence reports, captured documents, Prisoner of War (POW) interrogation reports and signal intelligence also indicates that the intrusion plan envisaged creating four independent groups from four Infantry Battalions and two companies of Special Service Groups already located in the FCNA region. These were:

- (a) 5 Northern Light Infantry (NLI) Battalion located at Hamzigund (interrogation reports of Naik Inayat Ali and Sepoy Hunar Shah, both 5 NLI—**Appendix D**).
- (b) 6 NLI Battalion located at Buniyal (diary of Captain Hussain Ahmad, 12 NLI—**Appendix D**).
- (c) 8 and 12 NLI Battalions located at Skardu and Gultari respectively (interrogation report of Sepoy Hunar Shah and diary of Captain Hussain Ahmad).
- (d) In addition, some elements of 3, 4, 7 and 11 NLI Battalions were also employed. The Chitral and Bajaur Scouts were employed for logistic support.¹⁴

5.12 A total of 18 artillery fire units provided fire support to the intruders from the Pakistani side of the LOC opposite the Kargil sector, ensuring that each intrusion area was supported by three to four fire units.

5.13 **Weapons/Equipment:** The weapons/equipment used by the intruders (as indicated by post-battle surveys made by Army Headquarters) were:

- (a) **Personal Weapons:** G3 rifles and AK 47s.
- (b) **Battalion Support Weapons:** Medium machine guns, automatic grenade launchers, RPGs and 82mm mortars.
- (c) **Air Defence Weapons:** ANZA anti-aircraft missiles, Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, and 12.7mm KPVT.
- (d) **Artillery:** 120mm mortars, 105mm mountain guns and 130mm Medium guns.
- (e) **Helicopters:** "Puma" and "Lama" (MI-17) helicopters.
- (f) **Special Equipment:** Gas masks, Passive Night Vision Devices (PNVDs) and Snow Scooters.

Execution of the Plan

Assessed Sequence of Events

5.14 Within two weeks of taking over, General Pervez Musharraf visited the FCNA region on October 20–21, 1998 along with Lieutenant General Mahmud Ahmad, GOC 10 Corps. The plan for intrusion into the Kargil sector may well have been fine-tuned at this stage. There are also indications that the plan was approved as early as October 1998 by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif when it was proposed to him by General Musharraf.¹⁵ Subsequently, in January 1999, Nawaz Sharif was briefed at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.¹⁶ Presumably, the final go-ahead was given at this stage. The reconnaissance of the Batalik sector may have been carried out in November–December 1998 (interrogation report of Naik Inayat Ali, 5 NLI). This may or may not have been done in other sectors. It is evident from Captain Hussain Ahmad's (12 NLI) diary that small groups, primarily consisting of officers, moved across

the LOC in the Mashkoh sector in February–March 1999 and established themselves in “igloo” tents. They carried out subsequent reconnaissance and created a few additional posts in the vicinity. The captured diary mentions that the parties that had intruded went through severe survival problems including severance of communications for a period of nearly 20 days and suffered casualties due to blizzards during end February/early March 1999, when the weather deteriorated. In early April 1999, a further build-up of advance elements was effected with the support of the Chitral and Bajaur Scouts in the Batalik and Mashkoh areas. The main body of troops commenced occupation of the heights across the LOC in the latter half of April 1999. (Own patrol of 4 JAT found Indian post at SW Spur at Pt. 5299 intact on April 12–13, 1999 from where troops had earlier been withdrawn on March 2, 1999 and this was subsequently occupied by Pakistani intruders.)¹⁷ Obviously they took care to move only into areas in the unheld gaps using routes that were not under observation of Indian winter posts. [...]

.....].* A certain amount of helicopter effort was also utilised by the Pakistan Army to support the intrusions (diary of Captain Hussain Ahmad, 12 NLI at Appendix D). By early May 1999, intrusions by the Pak Army had been effected in the Batalik, Kaksar, Dras and Mashkoh sectors. The depth and extent of intrusions across the LOC are indicated in the map given in Annexure 5.4 and Appendix H. A chronological sequence of events as they occurred is given in Annexure 5.5.

Number and Composition of Intruders in Kargil Sector

5.15 Details of the number and composition of intruders in the Kargil sector as provided to the Committee by various agencies is given in Annexure 5.6. These indicate that a total of 1,500–2,400 troops, both regular and irregular, were deployed. The Indian High Commission in Islamabad estimated that around 1,700 NLI troops were trained and deployed in Kargil.

* Government Security Deletion.

5.16 As regards the composition of the intruders, DGMI holds the view that virtually all were Pakistani regulars. However, R&AW and BSF maintain that the regular–irregular ratio was 60:40. IB placed the ratio at 70:30.

5.17 The DGMI's perception that all the intruders were regulars is based on:

- (a) The testimony of prisoners of war.
- (b) Captured identity cards, diaries/registers and personal effects of Pakistani Army personnel.
- (c) Matching of bodies with identity cards.
- (d) Fighting skills displayed by the intruders.
- (e) The weaponry utilised.

5.18 The contention of the other agencies that a substantial number of militants were used is based on a plethora of intercepts, statements by Pakistani leaders as well as leaders of militant groups, newspaper reports of militants killed in the fighting in the Kargil sector and human intelligence. However, it has been argued that radio transmissions by militants and some of the statements issued by the militant leaders and others might have been part of the deception plan to support the Pakistani thesis that this was an operation planned by militants.

5.19 In sum, it would be reasonable to assume that while those who occupied the heights on the Indian side of the LOC and fought the action were by and large Pakistani regulars (NLI troops), a number of Pakistan Army trained militants were also used in a supporting role. The regular/irregular ratio may well have been in the range of 70:30, if the overall numbers are taken into account. This is also supported by some of the inputs received by the Committee from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. The presence of militants is corroborated by inputs from various sources which indicate that about 243 militants were killed and 156 injured during the operations and their involvement is also mentioned in the captured diaries—albeit in a peripheral role. Pakistan has not announced any official figures of casualties of regular troops or militants. In order to maintain the fiction that this was a Mujahideen operation,

it went as far as to decline to receive the bodies of their regular soldiers from the Indian side. However, a few quiet requests for exhuming and handing over of bodies of men from highly-connected families were honoured. There are various estimates of Pakistani Army casualties. These estimates have been derived from published material in Pakistan and information provided by the Indian formations that fought the battle. The lowest estimate of regular Pakistani Army casualties is 700 killed. These include 71 officers, 69 of whom have been identified by name. A list showing the names of these officers is at Appendix D.

Further Accretions in FCNA (from May 6, 1999 onwards)

5.20 As the operations progressed and the Indian response mounted in the Kargil sector, further accretions were effected in FCNA region to reinforce the Pak defensive positions in order to pre-empt any stronger Indian reaction. From the information now available, the disposition of troops in FCNA region along the LOC opposite the Kargil sector in July 1999 is given in Annexure 5.7. The accretions were:

- (a) Brigade Headquarters—2
- (b) Infantry Battalions—13 (to reinforce the intrusions, defensive positions along the LOC, and in depth areas).
- (c) Special Services Groups (Companies)—2
- (d) Artillery Fire Units—15
- (e) Engineer Battalions—2
- (f) Signal Battalion—1

Indian Response

5.21 The intrusions in the Kargil sector were first noticed on May 3, 1999 by two "shepherds", [.....]* (both occasional sources of 121 Infantry Brigade), in the general area of Banju in the Batalik sector. This was reported to 3 PUNJAB,

* Government Security Deletion.

the battalion responsible for the security of that area. The sequence of actions thereafter in the various sub-sectors was as under:

- (a) *Batalik Sector*: 3 PUNJAB launched two patrols on May 4 and 6, 1999 to investigate the reported intrusion. The intrusion was confirmed by a 3 PUNJAB patrol on May 7, 1999. One company each of 10 GARHWAL RIFLES and 16 GRENADIERS was immediately moved to contain the intrusion. Soon, thereafter, two battalions (1/11 GR and 12 JAK LI), which had just been de-inducted from the Siachen sector and were readily available, were moved on May 9, 1999 and were in position in Batalik by May 10, 1999. Subsequently on May 11, 1999, HQ 70 Infantry Brigade, which was then at Dras, was moved and made responsible for this sector.
- (b) *Dras and Mashkoh Sectors*: Enemy intrusions in the Dras sector were detected on May 12, 1999 by a patrol of Ladakh Scouts and in Mashkoh sector by Army Aviation helicopters on May 14, 1999. 1 NAGA which had been moved from the Valley on May 9, 1999, soon after the detection of the intrusion in the Batalik sector, was diverted to Dras and employed from May 12, 1999 onwards to contain the intrusion in that area. 8 SIKH and 28 RR were moved in on May 14, 1999.
- (c) *Kaksar Sector*: The enemy intrusion was detected on May 14, 1999 by a patrol of 4 JAT in the area of Pt 5299 SW Spur, commonly known as Bajrang Post (the only post vacated by Indian troops on March 2, 1999 in the face of extreme snow conditions). Initially one company of 28 RR was released to contain the intrusion and subsequently, on May 21, 1999, 14 JAK RIF moved for deployment in the Kaksar sector.
- (d) *Sub-Sector Haneef (Turtok)*: Seven Pakistani helicopters were observed flying with under-slung loads in the area during the last week of April 1999. A patrol of 12 JAT sent to monitor activity along the LOC was ambushed on May 6, 1999. Subsequent patrols sent on May 16 and May 19, 1999

confirmed that the enemy had occupied the ridgeline along and across the LOC at five locations. 11 RAJ RIF and 9 MAHAR were tasked to occupy defences and the enemy was subsequently evicted by physical assault.

- (e) *Chorbat La Sector:* Once the enemy intrusions in Kargil and the Haneef sub-sector were established, five companies of LADAKH SCOUTS were moved to reinforce the Chorbat La sector. They occupied defences along the LOC during the period May 18–31, 1999 and foiled all enemy attempts to intrude into the area.

5.22 An examination of available records shows that by May 11, 1999, 15 Corps had acquired sufficient information to be able to assess that intrusions had taken place at a number of places in the Batalik sector. A 15 Corps Special Sitrep (situation report) dated May 11, 1999 (Annexure 5.8) details the information available and the action taken to contain the intrusions. By May 17, 1999, there was increasing evidence that armed intruders had occupied the heights in the gaps between the Indian defended areas in all sub-sectors of the Kargil sector in various strengths—Batalik (200–250), Kaksar (80–100), Dras (60–80) and Mashkoh (200–250). (Reply of DGMO to the questionnaire sent by the Kargil Review Committee at Appendix A). With a view to ensuring expeditious eviction of the intruders, the following formations/Headquarters, which were deployed for counter-insurgency operations in the Valley, were moved to Kargil during the period May 15, 1999 to June 1, 1999:

- (a) 56 Brigade to Dras sector—May 15, 1999.
- (b) 79 Mountain Brigade to Mashkoh sector—May 24, 1999.
- (c) HQ 8 Mountain Division moved to Kargil sector on May 29, 1999 and took over operational control of the Dras-Mashkoh sector w.e.f. June 1, 1999.

5.23 Once confirmed reports regarding major intrusions in the Batalik sector had become available, Headquarters Northern Command placed all troops in J&K in a state of high alert on May 12, 1999. Soon thereafter, certain other moves were also ordered within and into Northern Command to maintain operational balance.

5.24 Progressively defensive and offensive formations of the Army in the Western and Southern Commands were also moved forward closer to the border to ensure a balanced posture at the strategic level to deter Pakistan from escalating the conflict and prevent it from focussing solely on Kargil.

5.25 [.....]
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5.26 *Use of Naval Power (Operation TALWAR).* The Indian Navy too was involved in the Kargil operations at an early stage. At the Service Headquarters, the operational and the intelligence staff were involved in joint planning. The Indian Navy's Western Fleet swung into action, carrying out a precautionary deployment on May 22, 1999 to increase surveillance in the North Arabian Sea. This deployment was to ensure that there was no surprise at sea, as also to adopt a deterrent posture. By early June 1999, units of the Eastern Fleet had joined the Western Fleet. With assets worth Rs. 25,000 crore in the Bombay High area together with the vulnerability of the Gulf of Kutch, a forward posture by the Indian Navy was the best way to deter the Pakistan Naval forces. The Pakistan Navy reacted by cautioning its units to keep well clear of Indian Naval ships. The Indian Navy thereafter remained fully alert, oscillating from an "offensive" to an "offensive defence" posture. The Indian Navy also resorted to psychological operations by deploying units along the Makran Coast, which further put the Pakistan Navy on the defensive by making it escort Pakistani oil tankers between Karachi and the Gulf. Thus, while the Indian Navy's endeavour was in consonance with the national effort to prevent escalation of the Kargil conflict, a high level of deterrence was maintained at sea by keeping the maritime front under close watch.

* Government Security Deletion.

Analysis of Pakistani Intrusion and Indian Response

The Intrusion

5.27 A significant feature of the Pakistani intrusion plan was reliance on secrecy and stealth in pushing its forces through unheld gaps in the Indian defences in Kargil. This required that pre-intrusion activities opposite the Kargil sector, including the build up of logistics, be kept to the minimum, no major accretion be overtly planned, and the operation be carried out during a period when the unheld gaps were not under surveillance of Indian patrols. Care was also taken to ensure that permanent Indian posts in the sector were bypassed, using routes that were not under their direct observation.

5.28 There is little doubt that the operation was extremely well planned and executed and that Pakistan was able to achieve total surprise. It would also imply that the Indian Army's winter deployment might have been under Pakistani observation in 1997 and even earlier to make sure that their troops could intrude into the unheld gaps without attracting attention. However, after crossing the LOC in strength in late April 1999, the intruders needed time to move further forward, a feature or two at a time, in order to reach and firm in on forward features that more closely dominated the National Highway (NH-1A). In the event, the intruders were perhaps discovered a little too soon and were unable either to reach or firmly establish themselves on the forward features before the Indian Army reacted. This is evident from the fact that many of the forward hill features occupied by the intruders had very limited quantities of ammunition, water and supplies when they were re-captured by the Indian forces.

5.29 Pakistan also used a variety of deception measures to depict the Pakistan Army regulars as Mujahideen in order to maintain the façade that the intruders were "Kashmiri freedom fighters". This deception worked up to a point, as seen from foreign media coverage of the intrusion in the initial stages. But as evidence of the Pakistan Army's involvement started building up (in the form of taped conversations between General Musharraf and Lieutenant General Aziz, and the captured material), Pakistani pretensions started losing their

credibility. By early June 1999, it started becoming clear that the main body of intruders in fact consisted mostly of Pakistan Army regulars.

5.30 The intrusion involved the use of a relatively limited number of men (approximately 1,700 or so) across a restricted front, of much less than 100 kilometres to a depth of only five to nine kilometres (Appendix H). In military terms, this was not a very major operation either in terms of size or capability. In any case, the infrastructure available on the Pakistani side of the LOC and the limitations imposed by terrain and weather conditions did not allow the development of large size operations through the unheld gaps. Moreover, since the defenses on the Indian side were well served by a good road running across the front (NH-1A), there was little prospect of the Pakistanis being able to hold out once the Indians had built up forces to react in strength against the intrusions. The Pakistani operation cannot therefore be justified on military grounds. Its objectives were very likely political and diplomatic. The aim was to internationalise the Kashmir issue and freeze the ground situation to Pakistan's advantage through a ceasefire expected to be imposed by the international community. These points were emphasised by Nawaz Sharif in his address to the nation on July 12, 1999 (Annexure 5.1).

5.31 The nature of the Pakistani intrusion and the limitations imposed by the infrastructure available in the FCNA region required that the operation be undertaken with inadequate logistical back up. As they moved forward within Indian territory, the intruders had to be maintained almost entirely by porters along a tenuous line of supply, vulnerable both to artillery fire and air action. Thus, the sustainability of the intruding force decreased with each forward step. It is estimated that by early July 1999, a stage was reached when the Pakistani intruders were short of almost everything needed to sustain troops in battle, and their fighting ability was progressively eroding. There is every reason to believe that because of this, and the heavy damage being inflicted by Indian artillery and air action, Pakistani resistance would have collapsed much earlier than commonly anticipated. The US sponsored withdrawal of the intruders

from the Indian side of the LOC probably came as a welcome face saving device for the Pakistani establishment.

Indian Response

5.32 The Indian Army's response after the initial detection of intrusions was extremely rapid. The "Situation Report" initiated by HQ 15 Corps on May 11, 1999 (Annexure 5.8) shows that a comprehensive set of actions had been initiated in the Yaldor sector by May 11, 1999 to establish contact with the intruders, to fix the extent of the intrusion and contain it. In the ensuing days, additional steps were taken to move and deploy troops in the other sub-sectors to meet any contingencies that might arise. These energetic steps played an important role in containing the intrusions and restricting them to areas well short of the National Highway (NH-1A).

5.33 The intruders, most of whom were NLI personnel, came masquerading as Mujahideen. Pakistan used a variety of deceptions to propagate the myth that those who had crossed the LOC in the Kargil sector were "Kashmiri freedom fighters". The intruders were made to wear salwar-kameez; signals traffic was generated in Pushtu, Balti and other similar languages to "prove" the presence of Mujahideen; and statements were issued by leaders of militant organisations and others in Pakistan praising the successes achieved by the Mujahideen. Conditioned by the past experience and seeing intruders dressed in black salwar-kameez, the Indian Army's immediate assessment was that the intruders were militants. However, as some actions were fought against the intruders, the Army started developing the perception that the fighting skills being displayed by the intruders were those of regular Army soldiers. Notwithstanding this, the Army was still not clear about the composition of the intruding force. This is evident from the press briefing given by GOC 15 Corps on May 19, 1999 wherein in answer to a question he stated that although "the intruders are well armed and appear to be on almost suicidal mission", he had still no proof that they are Talibans and whether the intruding groups had regulars amongst them. It was only after some more encounters had taken place and identifications of intruders had been established through captured documents and

material by early June 1999, that the Indian Army concluded that the intruders contained a large proportion of regulars. It is not until much later that it became clear that most intruders were from the NLI. These inadequacies in assessments were reflected in Army Headquarters in Delhi as well [.....].*

5.34 The use of the Indian Air Force in support of the Army in Kargil was a significant development with far reaching consequences for the Pakistani intruders. Not only did this decision send a strong signal to Pakistan that India would use all available means to evict the intruders, but it also had a strong impact on the course of the tactical battle in terms of the interdiction of Pakistani supply lines within Indian territory, the damage inflicted on the Pakistani defences and the lowering of the morale of the intruders. Though Pakistan was aware of the deployment of the Indian Air Force on May 25, 1999 before the air strikes began [.....]* yet it appears to have decided to persist with its intrusion operations.

5.35 While the tactical battle was being fought in Kargil, the COSC in Delhi took steps at the strategic level to raise the ante for the other side and to influence the course of events. The reinforcement of the Western Fleet of the Indian Navy by the Eastern Fleet and the forward movement of strategic formations of the Indian Army towards the border in the Western and Southern theatres were among the steps taken in this direction. This not only deterred Pakistan from escalating the conflict, but also sent a clear message that all intruding Pakistanis would be evicted from Indian soil at any cost. This is very clear from Nawaz Sharif's broadcast to the nation on July 12, 1999.

Notes

1. Nawaz Sharif's address to his nation on July 12, 1999 (Annexure 5.1). Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Shamshad Ahmad's statement, cited by *News International*, May 31, 1999; Lieutenant General (Retd.) Asad Durrani

* Government Security Deletion.

- in *News*, July 28, 1999; Air Marshal (Retd.) M. Asghar Khan in *Nation*, July 29, 1999.
2. DGMOs talk on June 1, 1999 (Appendix D); Sartaj Aziz's statement prior to talks with Indian External Affairs Minister in June 1999; Zaffar Abbas in *The Herald*, August 1999; Editorial, *Friday Times*, August 5, 1999.
3. DGMOs talk on May 25, 1999 (Appendix D); Altaf Gauhar in *Nation*, "Four Wars, One Assumption", September 5, 1999; Maleeha Lodhi, "Anatomy of a Debacle", in *Newsline* (Karachi), July 1999.
4. General (Retd.) Mirza Aslam Beg's article "Kargil Conflict and Beyond", in *Nation*, May 30, 1999; Lieutenant General (Retd.) Javed Nasir's article "Kargil—A Flashpoint?", in *News*, June 26, 1999; Maleeha Lodhi, "Anatomy of a Debacle", in *Newsline* (Karachi), July 1999; General Pervez Musharraf's address to troops in Skardu Sector in March 1999; *Diary of Captain Hussain Ahmad* (Appendix D).
5. Editorial in *Friday Times* July 30 and August 5, 1999; Lieutenant General (Retd.) Asad Durrani in *News*, July 28, 1999.
6. The idea that nuclear weapons have served to deter India on "at least three occasions" was articulated by former Pakistan President, Ghulam Ishaq Khan in July 1993 and more recently in an article by former Pakistan Foreign Ministers, Aga Shahi and Abdul Sattar and Air Chief Marshal Zulfikar Ali Khan in *International News*, October 5, 1999.
7. Lieutenant General (Retd.) Javed Nasir in *Defence Journal*, February–March 1999.
8. Nawaz Sharif's address to his nation on July 12, 1999 (Annexure 5.1).
9. Altaf Gauhar, "Four Wars, One Assumption", *Nation*, September 5, 1999.
10. Interview given by Benazir Bhutto in British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) "World Today" radio programme on July 23, 1999.
11. Ali Usman in *Takbeer*, June 10, 1999 cited in *POT*, June 21, 1999, p. 2143, "In 1994 General Azizuddin finalised a plan to dislodge the Indian Army from Siachen. The most important part of the plan was to cut the India supply line to Siachen." At that time, General Musharraf was DGMO.
12. Zaffar Abbas, "Who Dunnit?", *The Herald*, August 1999, p. 66.
13. Selig Harrison, "First Put Pressure on Pakistan to Pull Back", *International Herald Tribune*, June 16, 1999.
14. *Interrogation Reports* of Naik Inayat Ali, 5 NLI and Sepoy Mohd Ayaz, 4 NLI (Appendix D).

15. ROD, G. Parthasarthy, Indian High Commission in Islamabad, November 9, 1999.
16. General (Retd.) Aslam Beg in *Dawn*, July 13, 1999.
17. ROD, Colonel M.S. Kuksal, Commanding Officer 4 JAT, September 15, 1999.

Chapter 6

Role, Functions and Operations of Intelligence Agencies and National Intelligence Framework

*When capable, feign incapacity,
When active, inactivity,
When near, make it appear that you are far away
When far away, that you are near,
Offer the enemy a bait to lure him,
Feign disorder and strike him.*

Sun Tzu

Perspective on Intelligence

6.1 Were there sufficient indicators to be able to predict Pakistan's designs on Kargil as revealed when discovered on May 3, 1999?

6.2 Before considering this, it would be useful to spell out the functions and operations of various intelligence agencies and the national intelligence framework. The Kargil invasion was the first regular war fought by India since 1971 and evoked much controversy on the extent of intelligence available and the action taken thereon.

6.3 An understanding of the processes of intelligence gathering and intelligence assessment and the role and responsibility of the various intelligence agencies is, therefore, necessary. Intelligence is by its very nature outside the normal public domain and has,

therefore, been enveloped in an aura of confidentiality. The absence of clear guideposts can mislead the unwary.

6.4 Not all those in the intelligence fraternity collect intelligence. This is the task of specified intelligence agencies which gather information pertaining to the country's variegated security interests, be they military, diplomatic, political, economic, technological, or otherwise. This information is also collected and collated from public sources such as newspapers, reports and from "sources" which may not necessarily be armed with cloak and dagger. It is also obtained by the application of technology as in the collection of satellite imagery, radio intercepts, etc. An outstanding example of this kind of effort is the communication intercepts obtained by the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) of the telephone conversations between General Musharraf in Beijing and Lieutenant General Aziz and Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad during the Kargil conflict.

6.5 Intelligence can be both of tactical and strategic relevance. Both are important at their own level, micro and macro.

6.6 Raw information is not intelligence unless distilled and analysed. Nor is all intelligence actionable or in a form that lends itself to operational action, positive or preventive. This requires careful assessment which is often done at a higher level. The Directorate General of Military Intelligence (DGMI), for example, is part of Army Headquarters. Its primary role is not the collection of intelligence, though it has a limited capability to collect tactical military intelligence through inputs from the Army's Field Intelligence Units and Signal Intelligence. It also gets some information and assessment from Defence Attaches/Advisors abroad. Its main role is strategic and tactical military assessment and its dissemination within the Army. Similarly, the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), whose functions have been subsumed in the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), is mandated to receive relevant inputs from all intelligence agencies as well as the DGMI, assess them at a strategic level and then share these assessments with key decision-makers.

6.7 The intelligence collecting agencies which provide inputs for military use comprise R&AW and the Intelligence Bureau (IB). The Border Security Force (BSF) has a 'G' Branch which collects

inputs in the area of its deployment and sends them to its Headquarters for dissemination. Wherever BSF battalions are under the operational control of the Army, they also send intelligence inputs to their Brigade. The DGMI receives intelligence inputs from a number of agencies and units for making its assessments. It receives information from civil intelligence collecting agencies, para-military forces like the BSF and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Brigade Intelligence Teams (BITs) as part of the Divisional Intelligence Units (DIU) and Intelligence and Field Security Units (IFSUs), which report directly to DGMI and endorse copies of their inputs to the Army Commands and forward units, which in turn send up information through normal channels. There is a separate Signal Intelligence Unit of the Army which directly reports to the DGMI. In addition, the Directorate of Air Intelligence (DAI) and the Directorate of Naval Intelligence (DNI) acquire information concerning their own spheres of interest and share this selectively on a need to know basis with other agencies. The apex intelligence coordinating agency, the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC)/National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), is not an intelligence collection agency and is primarily dependent on the aforementioned intelligence agencies as well as other ministries/departments for information and intelligence. Its assessments are, therefore, necessarily based on such inputs as are made available to it by the intelligence agencies and ministries/departments as well as from authentic open source material.

6.8 Intelligence collecting agencies use both HUMINT (Human Intelligence) and TECHINT (Technical Intelligence) sources to gather information. HUMINT entails the use of human assets such as agents, informers and contacts, who are monitored for collection of information pertaining to the country's security by officials both within the country and abroad. TECHINT, on the other hand, entails the use of technical means to gather such information. This is done through interception of communications, aerial reconnaissance and photographs, satellite imagery, etc.

6.9 Each of these intelligence collecting agencies has a traditional role as detailed below:

Research and Analysis Wing

6.10 *Role:*¹ Acquisition of intelligence on developments abroad, having a bearing on national security and its dissemination to relevant consumers notably the Ministries of External Affairs, Home Affairs and Defence, the NSCS, DGMI, DAI, and DNI and the IB. However, information is required to be shared only on a need to know basis.

6.11 *Resources:*

(a) *Humint:* It is accessed in the following manner:

- (i) Field Intelligence Posts (FIPs) along the border within India operate various sources. The FIPs are supervised by Special Bureaus (SB) suitably located in India.
- (ii) Officials posted in Indian diplomatic missions abroad customarily collect information and intelligence through diplomatic and a variety of other contacts as well as open source material.

(b) *Techint:* It is accessed in the following manner:

- (i) Imagery Intelligence (IMINT): The Aviation Research Centre (ARC), a branch of R&AW, is equipped to take photographs across the border up to a limited distance even while the aircraft flies within our own territory. IMINT is provided to the Army on demand.
- (ii) Electronic Intelligence (ELINT): The ARC is responsible for collection of ELINT by monitoring electromagnetic emissions. The collected information is disseminated to consumers.
- (iii) Communication Intelligence (COMINT): R&AW has communication monitoring stations at appropriate locations to intercept signals/communications. From these stations, internal and international telecommunication systems including the military communication network of countries of interest are monitored on a

selective basis. The intercepted traffic is forwarded to the concerned controlling units for analysis in Delhi. The latter disseminates the relevant inputs to consumers which includes the NSCS/JIC, IB and the Services Intelligence. The targets for COMINT are determined on the basis of consumer requirements.

6.12 Regular Outputs:

- (a) Weekly intelligence reviews (military & political).
- (b) Six-monthly assessments on Pakistan's capability to wage war.
- (c) Weekly briefings of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) on topical issues related to national security.
- (d) Special UOs on important developments. UOs are unofficial notes sent to other departments/ministries. A UO communication is different from official and demi-official communications only in terms of format. However, UOs are official communications.
- (e) R&AW is also expected to provide advance "warning" of hostile intent to initiate hostilities on the part of the nation's adversaries.

Intelligence Bureau

6.13 *Role.*² The IB is responsible for acquisition of intelligence on developments within the country affecting national security. It monitors terrorist/extremist/insurgency related activities, espionage activities, economic crimes and law and order. Information on issues which have long term implications for national security such as demographic changes and ethnic and communal tensions is also covered. The IB disseminates such information to the NSCS, R&AW, DGMI, the para-military forces and State Security Agencies on a need to know basis.

6.14 Resources:

- (a) *Humint*: It is accessed in the following manner:

- (i) It has officials posted in all States in the country and has posts along the border. These officials collect information through their human assets. Intelligence collected at the border areas which is of relevance to local army units is shared locally and also sent to their own superior HQ.

- (b) *Techint*: It is accessed in the following manner:

- (i) It has a limited COMINT capability primarily to intercept signals/messages to supplement its role as an internal security agency.

6.15 Regular Outputs:

- (a) Morning and evening bulletins which cover factual details of important incidents relating to the law and order situation in the country.
- (b) The daily intelligence digest which covers factual details of incidents relating to the law and order situation and political activities in the country.
- (c) Weekly reports which cover trends and developments on political, communal, fundamentalist, extremist, terrorist and insurgent activities in the country.
- (d) Fortnightly reports on J&K and the North-East.
- (e) Weekly briefings of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) which cover important aspects pertaining to internal security and are held regularly.
- (f) DIB's meetings with Services Intelligence Chiefs (DIB briefs the Services' Intelligence Chiefs occasionally).
- (g) UOs: These reports cover details of militant/insurgent activities as well as important developments affecting the security of the country/VIPs/vulnerable areas, etc. They are sent to the concerned agencies on a need to know basis.
- (h) Special papers: The IB also prepares papers on important topics which are sent to various agencies and departments.

Border Security Force

6.16 Role:³ The BSF is primarily responsible for policing the border during peace time. It also collects intelligence along and across the border. Over a period of time, the BSF has developed significant capability for intelligence acquisition. It sends the information to its HQ and shares this locally as well.

6.17 Resources:

- (a) *Humint*: Its 'G' Branch essentially employs human assets, though with a limited reach.
- (b) *Techint*: It also has a limited capacity to intercept messages and signals along the border.

6.18 Regular Outputs:

- (a) Daily situation report (sitreps): This covers sector-wise occurrences of daily incidents such as border firings.
- (b) Weekly intelligence reports: These cover militant activities, interception of militants, unauthorised border crossings and smuggling of narcotics/fake currency in J&K, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat and the North-East.
- (c) Special reports: These reports cover information about concentrations, infiltration/exfiltration, training camps of militants/insurgents, interrogation of arrested militants and other important developments.

The above mentioned reports are sent to the MHA, IB, R&AW, DGMI and NSCS. However, the BSF, where deployed under the Army's operational control, also sends source reports to local Army formations.

Directorate General of Military Intelligence

6.19 Role:⁴

- (a) Organisation and planning for intelligence acquisition relevant to Army operations, including signal and air photo intelligence both in peace and war.

- (b) Collection and dissemination of military intelligence.
- (c) Co-ordination and supervision of the work of Indian defence attaches and defence advisers abroad as also to deal with foreign military attaches and advisers in India.
- (d) Liaison with the Naval and Air Intelligence Directorates, R&AW and the IB.

(Note: The DGMI is not an independent intelligence collecting agency)

6.20 The DGMI in 1990-91 was given the additional responsibility of collecting tactical intelligence on defence related developments in Pakistan in addition to R&AW. In this context, it may be noted that the Defence Services were also permitted to have an independent facility for interception of satellite communications for purposes of collection of purely defence related information on Pakistan.

6.21 Resources:

- (a) *Humint*: It is accessed in the following manner:

- (i) While it does not collect intelligence directly, it receives inputs from its own units/agencies like Divisional Intelligence Units (DIUs), Brigade Intelligence Teams (BITs), Intelligence Field and Security Units (IFSUs) and paramilitary forces like the BSF (operating under the Army's operational control), who use human assets for collection of information.
- (ii) Divisional Intelligence Units (DIUs): Each DIU has a number of Brigade Intelligence Teams (BITs) which are attached to Brigades of the Division (one BIT with each Bde). These BITs collect inputs and report to DIU as well as to their Brigades. BITs depend entirely on HUMINT.
- (iii) Intelligence and Field Security Units (IFSUs): These collect information for operational requirements. They report directly to the DGMI but endorse copies to the Command HQ. They also depend entirely upon HUMINT.

(iv) The DGMI also gets information from various Army formations based on forward contacts where troops are deployed and routine patrolling by troops and Winter Aerial Surveillance Operations (WASO).

(b) *Techint*: It is accessed in the following manner:

- (i) Signal Intelligence Units (SIUs): The Army has Signal Intelligence Units which provide inputs to the DGMI on intercepts. SIU's report directly to the DGMI.
- (ii) Defence Imagery Processing and Analysis Centre (DIPAC): This organisation has been established to process imageries of areas across the border, taken from Indian satellites which at present have a limited capability (resolution 5.8 metres) and are expected to improve further.

JIC/NSCS

6.22 The JIC/NSCS is the apex intelligence co-ordinating organisation. It has no primary intelligence collection resources of its own but is required to be provided with all relevant inputs from other intelligence agencies as well as the DGMI, DAI, DNI, BSF, MHA and MEA. The representatives of all the intelligence agencies and concerned ministries have fortnightly meetings in the JIC/NSCS. Based on the inputs received and discussions held at these fortnightly meetings as well as authentic open source material, the JIC/NSCS issues a Monthly Intelligence Review and Strategic Analysis. It also prepares special papers on important topics. Its charter of duties as laid down in 1985 enjoined the JIC to "(a) assemble, evaluate and present intelligence from different sources pertaining to internal and external developments as may have a bearing on National Security; (b) prepare reports on its own initiative or as required by the Policy Planning Group on National Security or by the Cabinet Committee on National Security; (c) prepare special reports which would help in policy formulation in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)/Ministry of Defence (MOD)/ Ministry of

External Affairs (MEA)."⁵ The revised charter of duties of NSCS includes the duties of the erstwhile JIC.⁶

Notes

1. Secretary (R)'s DO to the Committee dt. August 11, 1999.
2. DIB's DO to the Committee dt. September 8, 1999.
3. ADIG (G), BSF's DO to the Committee dt. August 11, 1999.
4. DGMI's letter to the Committee dt. November 22, 1999.
5. Secretary, NSCS' statement dt. December 9, 1999.
6. *Ibid*.

Chapter 7

Intelligence Inputs on Kargil

7.1 All the inputs received from different intelligence agencies on the Pakistani activities in the Kargil sector since June 1998 are given at Appendix A. The more significant of these inputs along with a report of August 1997 are enumerated below together with details of the agencies with whom these inputs were shared and the Army's assessment of these inputs.

Inputs from R&AW, IB, BSF & Field Intelligence Units of the Army

August 1997

BIT

*Report:*¹ Presence of unarmed Pakistani persons in Yaldor sector.

(Given by [.....]* the "Shepherd", an occasional source of the Brigade Intelligence Team of 121 Infantry Brigade. The same person, along with [.....],* detected the Pakistani intrusion on May 3, 1999).

Intelligence Sharing: Information shared with 3 Infantry Division.

Assessment/Action Taken—121 Infantry Brigade: The intruders were assessed to be Pakistani regulars on a reconnaissance mission. Surveillance was enhanced and a patrol base was established in Yaldor. This was in the knowledge of the 3 Infantry Division, 15 Corps and the Northern Command. An elaborate plan was also formulated to check infiltration during the summer of 1998. In his interaction with the Committee, Brigadier Satyavir Yadav, Commander 121

* Government Security Deletion.

Infantry Brigade from June 29, 1996 to June 17, 1998, indicated that he recalled that some Pakistani intruders had come across into the Indian territory in 1996 but did not remember if any intruder had come in 1997.² However, the evidence collected by the Committee including interaction with Lieutenant Colonel P.M. Vasudevan, Officer Commanding BIT 121 Infantry Brigade who actually handled this operation clearly establishes that it happened in 1997.

June 1998

IB

*Report:*³ (a) "Increased activities at the borders and continuing endeavour to infiltrate a large group of foreign mercenaries in the aftermath of the nuclear tests."

(b) "According to a report from Kargil, increased movement of Pak Army is discernible in Chor, Hadi, Saddle, Reshma, Masjid, Dhalan and Langer posts along the LOC in the past five days. Pak Army personnel constructing a suspension bridge at Khol on river Indus (MRE-76 degree 13; N-34 degree 47, Map No. 52 B) and a helipad on the bank of Indus river at MRE-75 degree 49; N-34 degree 39, Map No. 52 N)."

(c) "Movement of Pak fighter aircraft at Skardu airstrip."

Intelligence sharing: This report issued by the Directorate of Intelligence Bureau (DIB) while not copied to R&AW or the JIC/NSCS, was inter alia copied to the main consumer, viz. the Directorate General of Military Operation (DGMO) as well as to the Prime Minister, Home Minister, Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary and Defence Secretary. This information, according to IB was also verbally shared with the then Commander, 121 Infantry Brigade, Brigadier S. Yadav. Brigadier Yadav had no recollection of this particular report. The Intelligence Log (Register) of 121 Infantry Brigade did not show this either. Later DGMI had received this information through the DGMO.

Assessment/Action Taken—DGMI:⁴ These increased activities were part "of a heightened alert and activity all along the border after the nuclear blasts and was in conformity with those".

July 1998

IB

*Report I:*⁵ (a) Deployment of "M-11 Chinese missiles at Deosai plains". (Also received by 3 Infantry Division in October, 1998 from 15 Corps.)

(b) "Laying of mines by Pak army near LOC in Kargil Sector". (Also received by 3 Infantry Division in Sept. 1998 from 15 Corps.)

*Report II:*⁶ "Infiltration of 30 militants from Kargil border to Doda".

Intelligence Sharing: The information at Report I (a) and (b) according to the DIB's communication to the Kargil Review Committee was verbally shared only with the Commander 121 Infantry Brigade, Brigadier Surinder Singh. However, the latter did not recollect having received these inputs from the IB. Report II was sent to the DGMI by IB.

Assessment/Action Taken—3 Infantry Division:⁷ Reports at I and II were uncorroborated. However, these reports were sent to 102 Infantry Brigade, 121 Infantry Brigade and 3 Artillery Brigade. The DGMI on Report II: "Reports of projected infiltration attempts are routinely received from areas opposite the whole stretch of LOC".

R&AW

*Report:*⁸ (a) "Deployment of 164 Mortar Regiment in Gultari with its detachments deployed along the LOC opposite Dras/Kargil Sector".

(b) "8 NORTHERN LIGHT INFANTRY (NLI) Battalion deployed in Hamzigund".

(c) "69 BALUCH deployed at Olthingthang".

(d) "About 15 to 20 per cent from each company of NLI and 69 BALUCH had been imparted commando training and deployed at the forward posts".

Intelligence Sharing: The weekly report was sent to all intelligence agencies, Services HQ, DGMI and JIC/NSCS.

Assessment/Action Taken—DGMI:⁹ No specific comments at that time. However, the DGMI stated subsequently in reply to the Com-

mittee that "the weekly reports of R&AW cover events of preceding week. The reportage includes exchange of fire along LOC and international border, training, exercises, operational alerts, field firing, trials, visits, defence co-operation and new raisings... Wherever Kargil was mentioned it related to exchange of artillery fire. There was no input to suggest intrusion/infiltration in Kargil."

BIT

*Report:*¹⁰ (a) "Continuous dumping of ammunition and ration".

(b) "Movement of additional troops. Identity not known".

(c) "Improvement of Shaqma-Shirting road".

(d) "Militants in civil dress in Skardu, Warcha and Marol, awaiting induction".

Intelligence Sharing: This information was not shared with any civil intelligence agency and the JIC/NSCS. However, it was sent to 3 Infantry Division.

Assessment/Action Taken—121 Infantry Brigade:¹¹ This was "restricted to routine activities by the adversary".

August 1998

IB

*Report I:*¹² (a) "The Pak Army had been constructing a new post and fortifying the defences and bunkers in its territory opposite our post at Chorbat La since July 21, 1998".

(b) "The Pak Army had deployed seven artillery guns and 25 Army personnel at the new post".

*Report II:*¹³ The objective of increased Pak firing in the Kargil area was "projecting Kashmir as a flashpoint".

Intelligence Sharing: The information contained at Report I (a) and (b) according to DIB's note sent to the Committee was verbally shared with HQ 3 Infantry Division. However, it was not available in the records of 3 Infantry Division. Report II was sent to all intelligence agencies, Services HQ, DGMI and JIC/NSCS.

Assessment/Action Taken—DGMI:¹⁴ The information at Report II indicated “heightened activities along the LOC and attributable to tension on both sides in the post Pokhran blast period and heavy exchange of artillery fire”.

R&AW

Report:¹⁵ The Pakistan Army was trying “to create a volatile situation along the LOC”.

Intelligence Sharing: This assessment was sent to all agencies and JIC/NSCS.

Assessment/Action Taken—DGMO:¹⁶ This information pertained to Pak firing and its aim at creating panic by threatening to cut off the Kargil Road.

BIT

Report:¹⁷ (a) “Mixed group of Pak and Afghan militants (30–35) were present at Marol with local guides to cross over to India. Likely route—Grugurdo—Garkhun Nala”.

(b) “Presence of additional troops including personnel in civil dress”.

(c) “Ammunition dumping at all forward areas”.

Intelligence Sharing: These inputs were not shared with any civil intelligence agency nor with JIC/NSCS.

Assessment/Action Taken—3 Infantry Division:¹⁸ (a) “Not corroborated by other intelligence agency”.

(b) “No further activity reported”.

(c) “No movement of militants observed or encountered in area Batalik”.

(d) “Intensification of patrols in own area”.

IFSU

Report:¹⁹ (a) “Manning of Pak guns by Chinese”.

(b) “500 Afghan militants camping at Gurikot for induction—possible routes of induction are Kel Nala, Safed Nala, Kaobal Gali, Sonamarg, Talel, Pandras, Mashkoh, Boiyal and Dras.”

Intelligence Sharing: These reports were shared with 121 Infantry Brigade but not with civil intelligence agencies.

Assessment/Action Taken—3 Infantry Division:²⁰ (a) “Training of militants is ongoing in POK. Groups are infiltrating to replace militants who have become casualties in J&K or to enhance their potential in J&K”.

(b) “Such training camps are located on the periphery of J&K in POK opposite both Corps zones”.

(c) “The same information has been provided to 121 Infantry Brigade by Intelligence and Field Security Unit (IFSU) and sent to higher HQ”.

15 CORPS (Monthly Intelligence Review)

Report:²¹ Pak ISI is making an “all out effort to activate Kargil–Dras Sector and areas of South of Pir Panjal”.

Intelligence Sharing: Information sent to 3 Infantry Division.

Assessment/Action Taken—15 Corps:²² “Information general in nature”.

Northern Command

Report:²³ “A four fold increase in animal transport movement as compared to the previous month”.

Intelligence Sharing: Information shared with DGMI.

Assessment/Action Taken—Northern Command:²⁴ Considerable increase in animal transport movement at Marpo La Complex (MU 4565) was indicative of likely construction of new weapon emplacements/upgradation of existing defences to facilitate induction of new weapon system.”

September 1998

R&AW

Report I:²⁵ “The deployment of 7 Field Regiment and 8 Medium Regiment in operational area”.

*Report II:*²⁶ "The Pak Army had engaged contractors to ferry one lakh kg of ammunition to posts in Gultari, Hassan and Javed".

Intelligence Sharing: These inputs were given in the weekly intelligence reports which were sent to all civil intelligence agencies, the DGMI and JIC/NSCS. 121 Infantry Brigade and 3 Infantry Division had this input as well.

Assessment/Action Taken—121 Infantry Brigade and 3 Infantry Division assessed that the quantity of ammunition was small. 3 Infantry Division²⁷ further commented, "Likely replenishment of artillery ammunition expended during shelling across the Line of Control (LOC) in Kargil Sector or stocking for winter. Likely relief of Units prior to onset of winter or to augment resources in the sector."

*Report III:*²⁸ (a) "Additional unidentified unit reported in Gultari area".

(b) "Artillery ammunition dumping stocking in Gomothang area by vehicles up to Memusthang, Marol, Breilmaru, Brachil Chu on Yaks and to K-2 posts on ponies. (12 Ponies located at Gomathang.)"

Intelligence Sharing: This input was shared with 3 Infantry Division.

Assessment/Action Taken—3 Infantry Division:²⁹ "Movement may have been under-taken as a precautionary measure in view of our own additional troops deployed in the sector as follows:

- (a) 26 MARATHA LIGHT INFANTRY/16 GRENADIERS deployed in Mashkoh Valley.
- (b) 9 MAHAR as Division reserve battalion.
- (c) 79 Infantry Brigade reconnaissance and order group recce in the sector with effect from September 15, 1998 to October 30, 1999. Integral battalions deployed West of Zojila. Affiliated artillery regiment deployed in area Dras."

BIT

*Report:*³⁰ (a) "Increased activity in Gultari".

(b) "Leave of Pak troops still not restored".

(c) "Increased helicopter activity at Dukas and Gultari".

Intelligence Sharing: This information was not shared with civil intelligence agencies and JIC/NSCS.

Assessment/Action Taken—121 Infantry Brigade:³¹ No comments are available.

IFSU

*Report:*³² (a) "Track improvement in general area opposite Batalik".

(b) "Evacuation/movement of civilians in the vicinity of Line of Control to Skardu relief camps and war hysteria raised by military officials amongst population."

(c) "In 1st week of September, 1998, six to seven militants came to Panikhar village and forced recruitment of young boys and asked to provide guides to Chorbat La and Turtok areas. Local population refused to provide guides pleading that they were not familiar with the area."

Intelligence Sharing: Not shared with civil intelligence agencies and JIC/NSCS.

Assessment/Action Taken—3 Infantry Division:³³

(a) "Location not indicated".

(b) "May be due to own artillery shelling in retaliation to Pak shelling in Kargil sector".

(c) "Not corroborated by another intelligence agency".

(d) "Periodic patrol to Panikhar included in Division Patrolling Policy. Patrolling carried out to Panikhar during September 22–28, 1998".

Northern Command

*Report I:*³⁴ "Pak inducted 57 mm guns in general areas Breilman (opposite Kaksar Sector)".

Intelligence Sharing: It was shared with 15 Corps and 3 Infantry Division.

Assessment/Action Taken—3 Infantry Division:³⁵ "Interdiction of own vehicle movement astride NH 1A".

Report II—(FIR): "Uncorroborated reports indicated that ammunition is being stocked on war footing with the help of civilians from Kharmang and Brachil at the following gun positions:

- i) K-2
- ii) Gomathang
- iii) Mamusthang
- iv) Olthingthang
- v) Marol"

Intelligence Sharing: It was shared with 15 Corps and 3 Infantry Division.

Assessment/Action Taken—3 Infantry Division:³⁶ "Stocking of ammunition expedited prior to onset of winter".

October 1998

Northern Command

*Report:*³⁷ "6 Northern Light Infantry (NLI) tasked to prepare two Helipads".

Information Sharing: Intelligence report shared with 15 Corps and 3 Infantry Division.

Assessment/Action Taken—3 Infantry Division:³⁸ "Upgradation of logistics infrastructure".

IB

*Report:*³⁹ "It has been observed that the Pak Army has of late been resorting to use of Remotely Piloted Vehicles (RPVs) in Siachen area for clandestine photography/recce of army deployment/IAF installations. One such RPV was seen over Turtok in the last week of July. Two more RPVs were also noticed in our air space at Turtok and Diskit area of Dist Kargil on September 17 and September 23 respectively."

Intelligence Sharing: According to IB, this information was shared with the HQ 121 Infantry Brigade verbally on several occasions. The UO was sent to the MHA and MOD only.

Assessment/Action Taken—Briefing by Commander 121 Infantry Brigade to the Army Commander, Northern Army (January 18–22, 1999): "The Commander highlighted the frequent movement

of RPVs over his Brigade Sector. There was a requirement of deploying L-70 AD Guns. The Army Commander expressed his differing view about the RPV threat and explained the limitations of deploying RPVs in mountains, particularly in the manner reported by the formation. He also discounted the deployment of L-70 guns due to their limited utility in the existing scenario." However, he directed that "DG Artillery be approached to send some officers trained on RPVs to visit the Brigade Sector for analysing the reported Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs)/RPVs phenomenon."⁴⁰ The Air HQ had received a large number of reports on suspected RPV sightings in the Kargil sector September 1, 1998 onwards. After due analysis, Air HQ felt that these reports were not credible for a variety of reasons and had rejected them. The analysis done by Air HQ is attached at Appendix A.

R&AW

*Report:*⁴¹ (a) "Meanwhile, in order to offset its disadvantage in Lipa and Neelam Valleys, Pakistan appeared hell bent on interdicting our Dras–Kargil highway, as two additional artillery and one mortar regiment are concentrated in the area. There is a constant induction of more troops and guns from peace locations like Mangla, Lahore, Gujranwala and Okara into the POK to reinforce its troops. Massive preparations were launched to improve field defences, concretise the bunkers and stock ammunition. Meanwhile, Dras–Kargil Highway and the local population appear to have become the focal point of Pak Army's vengeance."

(b) "A limited swift offensive threat with possible support of alliance partners can not be ruled out. Meanwhile, Pakistan would continue to indulge in Proxy War in Kashmir and would keep the Line of Control volatile."

Intelligence Sharing: These reports were sent to IB, Service HQ, DGMI and JIC/NSCS.

Assessment/Action Taken—DGMI:⁴² The mention of "a limited swift offensive threat from Pak with some alliance partners' was out of context and had not been analysed or discussed in the body of the paper at any stage. Since this was without any reasoning, queries

were raised by the MI Directorate regarding this. No satisfactory reply was received. Further, this possibility was omitted in the next six monthly assessment given in March, 1999." R&AW officials, however, indicated to the Kargil Review Committee that all queries were answered verbally though they agreed that the possibility of an offensive was not repeated in the next six-monthly report. On the issue of constant induction of troops, R&AW officials stated that their reference was to POK as a whole and not limited to Force Commander Northern Area (FCNA) region.

BIT

*Report:*⁴³ (a) "Three Radars at Marpola, Gumbad, Saddle and Rele".

(b) "Movement of Taliban and other militants opposite Kargil Sector".

(c) "Presence of militants along nalas and tracks from Panikhar to Pahalgam".

(d) "Likely hide outs Bowang Peak and Dusbal".

(e) "Migration of Matayan residents to Valley likely during winters".

Intelligence Sharing: This report was not shared with civil intelligence agencies or with JIC/NSCS.

Assessment/Action Taken—121 Infantry Brigade: No comments are available.

November 1998**IB**

*Report:*⁴⁴ (a) "Pakistan was training Taliban who were undergoing military training as well as learning Balti and Ladakhi language".

(b) "Likely to be infiltrated into Kargil area sometime during April, 1999".

(c) "These mercenaries were being trained by locals of Kharmang area in POK whose language and culture were similar to those of Kargil people".

(d) "These mercenaries after infiltration would take shelter in Dras and Panikhar areas of Kargil district".

Intelligence Sharing: This information was verbally shared with the Brigade Commander 121 Infantry Brigade. It was not shared with other intelligence agencies.

Assessment/Action Taken—3 Infantry Division informed the Kargil Review Committee that this pertained to militant activities and that such reports were also received in other sectors.

BIT

*Report:*⁴⁵ (a) "Visit of Pak Chief of Army Staff (Gen. Pervez Musharraf) and senior Pak officers to Hamzigund and other forward areas".

(b) "Near completion of Shaqma-Shirting road".

(c) "Concentration of Pak troops twice in strength, to capture Left and Right Bump in Kargil Battalion Area".

(d) "10 Talibans crossed over between Sonamarg and Ghumri in 3rd week of November 1998".

Intelligence Sharing: These inputs were not shared with civil intelligence agencies and JIC/NSCS.

Assessment/Action Taken: On (c) 121 Infantry Brigade⁴⁶ commented that it had sent this information to the Battalions and asked them to strengthen defences. On (d) 3 Infantry Division⁴⁷ commented that "Information not corroborated" and "No militants were seen or encountered moving through the area". No comments on (b). Regarding (a) Northern Command considered it to be a familiarisation visit.

Northern Command

*Report:*⁴⁸ "COAS visited forward units/posts gun positions under 80 Infantry Brigade/FCNA on October 20/21, 1998".

Intelligence Sharing: This report was shared with 15 Corps and 3 Infantry Division.

Assessment/Action Taken—3 Infantry Division:⁴⁹ "Likely familiarisation visit on assumption of new appointment". Information forwarded to 3 Artillery Brigade, 102 Infantry Brigade and 121 Infantry Brigade.

December 1998

BSF

*Report I:*⁵⁰ (a) "About 500 Taliban and Lashkar-e Toiba militants who were camping at Gurikot, had been taken out from there" and "have been sent to Kashmir".

(b) "About 100 militants still at the camp and efforts were being made to push them into Kashmir".

(c) "Fighter aircraft were landing every second/third day at Skardu" and were "also carrying out night practices".

(d) A new helipad had been made at Deosai opposite our Kaksar area where big size helicopters had been landing.

(e) A new office of Field Intelligence Unit (FIU) had been established at Olthingthang.

(f) In Olthingthang, a number of underground bunkers had been made and some more were under construction.

Intelligence Sharing: This information was sent in writing to 121 Infantry Brigade but was not sent to NSCS, IB and R&AW.

Assessment/Action Taken—the DGMO:⁵¹ commenting on this report said that "the inputs indicated militant plan to infiltrate in areas Kupwara, Baramulla, Gurez (West of Kargil), Srinagar, Poonch and Rajouri".

3 Infantry Division:⁵² "Specific areas of infiltration not mentioned. Information received through 121 Infantry Brigade group and conveyed to higher formations."

*Report II:*⁵³ (a) "Pak ISI is planning to disrupt traffic of Army and civil supplies by undertaking sabotage activities at various vital bridges and other vital installations situated on the Bandipur-Gurez Road in Kashmir Valley. It is further learnt that, to accomplish aforementioned task, a special mission has been assigned by Pak ISI to Pak Army Ex-Col Shamas."

(b) "In this special mission, eighty (80) specially trained militants have been kept at the disposal of Col. Shamas, out of which, 40 militants under the supervision of one Manzoor have already been infiltrated into Kashmir Valley and the remaining group is likely to

infiltrate from Chorgali from the area of Pak FDL Losar-III in Gurez sector."

(c) "Col Shamas is likely to infiltrate to own side in February '99 and the special mission is likely to commence w.e.f. March 1, 1999".

Intelligence Sharing: This report was shared with the MHA, IB, R&AW, JIC/NSCS and DGMI.

Assessment/Action Taken: The Committee was informed by 121 Infantry Brigade that it related to militancy in the Valley.

Northern Command

*Report:*⁵⁴ (a) "There has been approximately a three-fold increase in troop movement as against November, 1998 and 71.48% decrease when compared to December, 1997".

(b) "Vehicle and Animal Transport movement showed a two-fold and nine-fold increase respectively when compared to the previous month".

Intelligence Sharing—Information shared with DGMI.

Assessment/Action Taken—Northern Command:⁵⁵ (a) "All the movements appeared to be connected with routine administration of troops and were observed in the areas of new unloading points".

(b) "The increase in vehicle/Animal Transport movement could be attributed to the substantial decrease in trans-LC firing during the period".

January 1999**IB**

*Report I:*⁵⁶ "A Pakistani MI-17 Helicopter intruded into Indian air space and remained hovering over Kargil, Gundermon and Marpola for about 45 minutes".

*Report II:*⁵⁷ "Militants were planning to target (i) Bandipur-Gurez (ii) Kangan-Leh (c) Jammu-Srinagar Highways by planting IEDs near culverts, tunnels, places prone to landslides with a view to disrupting communication and supply lines."

Intelligence Sharing: The information given at (I) was verbally shared with the officiating Commander, 121 Infantry Brigade, Kargil. This information was also shared with 3 Infantry Division. The second input (IB UO) was sent to the MOD only.

Assessment/Action Taken: 121 Infantry Brigade⁵⁸ wrote to 3 Infantry Division—"Declaring Mashkoh Nala as Priority IV needs to be reviewed in view of the number of intelligence reports sent by HQ 3 Infantry Division listing out increased militant activities opposite Mashkoh Valley." This was with reference to Winter Air Surveillance Operation (WASO) sorties.

R&AW

*Report:*⁵⁹ "Pakistan's interest in procurement of 500 pairs of military boots for use in extreme cold conditions from Finland".

Intelligence Sharing: This input was shared with the DGMI, MOD and NSCS/JIC.

Assessment/Action Taken: No comments are available.

Northern Command

*Report:*⁶⁰ "There has been three-fold increase in blasting activity as compared to previous month at Olthingthang MU 934924".

Intelligence Sharing: Information shared with DGMI.

Assessment/Action Taken—Northern Command:⁶¹ "The same could be related to maintenance of roads/tracks and construction of defences and underground bunkers".

February 1999

R&AW

*Report:*⁶² (a) "The top army brass may not be entirely united in their approach to the proposed thaw in Indo-Pak relations".

(b) "A section of senior army officers in the GHQ still hold the view that Pakistan cannot hope to get a favourable deal from India unless it deals with India from a position of strength".

Intelligence Sharing: These reports were shared with the Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, Defence Secretary, Secretary National Security Council Secretariat and Directorate of Intelligence Bureau.

Assessment/Action Taken: This information was reflected in strategic assessments.

BIT

*Report:*⁶³ "50-60 Militants operating under garb of J&K State Government department official/staff".

Intelligence Sharing: Shared only with 121 Infantry Brigade.

Assessment/Action Taken—3 Infantry Division:⁶⁴ "Could not be identified but suspected personnel in the areas were kept under surveillance".

Northern Command

*Report I:*⁶⁵ (a) "Pak PM visited various areas of Kotli, Nikial and Kel on 05 February '99 to address solidarity day meeting organised in POK. Also visited HQ 32 Infantry Brigade to address the troops. Meeting at Kotli attended by GOC 10 Corps, CM of POK, DG ISI, political leaders and approx 2000 militants."

(b) "Provision of hospital facilities at Kel and casualties evacuation by helicopter".

(c) "Pak PM visited Gilgit, Skardu and other parts of Northern areas of FCNA besides Muzaffarabad and Kel".

Intelligence Sharing: Shared with 3 Infantry Division.

Assessment/Action Taken—3 Infantry Division:⁶⁶ (a) "Likely aim to draw political mileage. Participation of large number of militants along with leaders indicate covert nexus. Visit to forward areas to boost morale of troops".

(b) "Casualties evacuation/treatment of forward troops".

(c) "To boost up morale of troops".

*Report II:*⁶⁷ "A substantial increase in troop movement was noticed as compared to the previous month; but considerably higher than February, 1998".

Intelligence Sharing: Shared information with DGMI.

Assessment/Action Taken: No comments are available.

March 1999

R&AW

*Report I:*⁶⁸ (a) "The existence of underground bunkers at Olthingthang, Marol and forward posts along the Line of Control in the battalion area".

(b) "Efforts being made to widen the Shirting-Shaqma road (approx. 50 km in length)."

*Report II:*⁶⁹ "A Commanders conference held at Gilgit presumably attended by Chief of the Army Staff, General Pervez Musharraf where some hard decisions have reportedly been taken concerning maintenance of a strong posture on deployments in forward areas."

*Report III:*⁷⁰ "Deployment of Pak troops and artillery along the LOC under 10 Corps continues to remain heavy" and "Pak troops have been consistently firing on Dras-Kargil highway at right timings to avenge the disadvantage suffered elsewhere".

Intelligence Sharing: Inputs at (I), (II) and (III) were sent to the DGMI.

Assessment/Action Taken—DGMI:⁷¹ on Report (III)—The possibility of a limited swift offensive indicated in the October, 1998's assessment was omitted in the March 1999 assessment. No comments are available for (I) and (II).

3 Infantry Division

*Report:*⁷² "Detailed plan worked out for evacuation of border villages".

Intelligence Sharing: The report was shared with 121 Brigade only.

Assessment/Action Taken—No comments are available.

April 1999

Northern Command

*Report:*⁷³ "323 Infantry Brigade scheduled to conduct a divisional study on employment of Mujahideen in conventional warfare during mid-intensity conflict and all out war".

Intelligence Sharing: Shared with 3 Infantry Division.

Assessment/Action Taken—Northern Command:⁷⁴ "Updating the operational concepts with regard to utilisation of Mujahideen in all out war".

May 1999

BIT

*Report:*⁷⁵ Presence of unidentified persons in Yaldor Sector (May 3, 1999) (Given by [.....])* occasional sources of BIT of 121 Infantry Brigade).

Intelligence Sharing: Shared with 3 Infantry Division.

Assessment/Action Taken: Patrols sent and operation started.

IB

*Report:*⁷⁶ "Pak Army has captured one of our seasonal posts in Batalik Sector (Kargil—May 7)".

Intelligence Sharing: Report sent to the DGMI, DGMO, MHA and NSCS.

Assessment/Action Taken: This was discussed in the NSCS meeting on May 14, 1999. While BSF and IB representatives pointed out that more than 300 infiltrators had come in the Kargil sector, the representatives of DGMI and R&AW stated that they had no such information either on the intrusion or on capture of the post.⁷⁷

ARC Reports:

Based on the demand of the Army, the ARC carried out air reconnaissance missions in September–October, 1998. It supplied photographs of general area on the Pakistani side from Kamari to Chulung opposite Kargil and Dras. These reports highlighted posts and camps along with the LOC. However, no unusual activity and development across the LOC was noticed. ARC has given the following comments on its reports:⁷⁸

* Government Security Deletion.

"Prior to September, 1998, only 2 indents were received from Army for coverage of areas North of LOC in Kargil Sector of POK. The indents were essentially for location of artillery gun positions. Against these indents, photo reconnaissance missions were successfully executed in Kargil sector on September 16, 1998 and October 21, 1998. As requested by Army, information on the gun locations was disseminated on top priority besides intelligence on helipads, camps & posts, etc. Subsequent to this the next indent from Army for coverage of Kargil Sector including some areas South of LOC to monitor intrusive activity was received only on May 12, 1999.

A comparative examination of the two pre-Op VIJAY missions with almost 90% overlapping coverage of area North of LOC mentioned above, from the specific point of picking out indications of any build up has not revealed any significant changes that could be related to heavy build up."

WASO (Winter Air Surveillance Operations) Reports

The Army had been keeping surveillance along the LOC through WASO sorties with the help of its helicopters. The detailed WASO reports and patrolling procedures are given in Chapter 4. However, nothing was picked up through these sorties about infiltration/intrusion.

Patrolling

In accordance with the patrolling policy laid down by 3 Infantry Division, 121 Infantry Brigade was required to undertake winter patrolling in various areas to the extent possible. The details of patrolling done is given in Chapter 4. Patrol reports did not provide any information regarding intrusion until May 5, 1999.

JIC/NSCS Assessments

7.2 The JIC/NSCS had, on the basis of such inputs as were received from various intelligence agencies as well as on the basis of open sources, given the following overall strategic assessments in its reports issued from time to time:

July 1998

(i) Strategic Analysis 07/98 (Pak):⁷⁹ "In the post-nuclear test period, Pakistan's moves are directed towards projecting Kashmir as a flash-point on account of its perception that the present international environment is conducive for such a projection. Towards this end, a three-fold strategy seems to have been adopted; to project that India is not willing to solve the problems through negotiations and that the bilateral mode is not likely to resolve the issue; to intensify the firing along the LOC to project the possibility of its escalation into a (nuclear) war; and lastly to intensify its proxy war in J&K to project that the local people are continuing and have intensified their movement." It further stated, "Pakistani firing on the LOC is thus aimed at projecting a volatile situation in South Asia. In view of the forthcoming UN General Assembly session in September and the interest being taken by the US in South Asia, tension on the LOC is likely to be kept up by Pakistan."

(ii) Monthly Intelligence Review 07/98 (Pak):⁸⁰ "Towards the end of July, coinciding with SAARC meeting, Pakistan resorted to heavy shelling in the entire northern sector of J&K resulting in heavy civilian casualties (35 killed during July-August, 1998). The population along the border affected by Pak firing have started moving to safer places. In the Kargil sector media reports indicated that about 80% of the population has moved to safer places." In elaborating the Pak designs it remarked, "Pakistan is thus proficient in using the nuclear card to secure its politico-diplomatic objectives. In the post-test scenario its ability to paint such scare scenarios has increased considerably. Given their past policy it is likely that Pakistan would maintain a considerable level of tension on the LOC particularly at times when US interlocutors were focussed on the sub-continent. The CTBT too would be used as a bargaining chip to encourage the US and Western countries to focus on Kashmir."

September 1998

(i) Strategic Analysis 09/98 (J&K):⁸¹ "Reports indicate that ISI would utilise the month of October for pushing in more trained militants along with arms and ammunition".

(ii) Monthly Intelligence Review 09/98 (Pak):⁸² "Earlier Pakistan had been attempting to use the nuclear issue and signing of the CTBT to attract international attention to Kashmir and the danger of a nuclear war in the region".

October 1998

(i) Monthly Intelligence Review 10/98 (Pak):⁸³ "Despite resumption of Foreign Secretary level talks, Pakistani leaders have neither changed the direction nor given up the central theme of their propaganda campaign that Kashmir continued to be the core issue and unless there is progress on this issue no improvement in the relation between the two countries could be expected." It further stated that "the Pakistan Prime Minister conveyed to the Indian Foreign Secretary on October 16 that the nuclearisation of South Asia had converted Kashmir into a nuclear flashpoint and undermined peace and security in the region."

(ii) Strategic Analysis 10/98 (Pak):⁸⁴ "There were three attacks on Siachen in the second fortnight of October which may be seen in the context of Pakistani efforts to project that a volatile situation exists along the Indo-Pak border."

(iii) Monthly Intelligence Review 10/98 (J&K):⁸⁵ "...there were pitched battles between them (militants) and SFs including the Army".

November 1998

(i) Based on the reports received from intelligence agencies the JIC in its paper on "J&K: Trends in Militancy (07/98)"⁸⁶ issued in November, 1998 spelled out the likely Pakistani plan in J&K. The main points mentioned in the paper were as follows:

- "Militancy thus reached the second phase of Operation TOPAC*.
- Explaining Operation TOPAC it stated that the second stage envisaged "exertion of pressure on sensitive spots like Siachen, Kargil and Rajouri/Poonch sectors to keep the Indian security forces engaged outside the Valley and sending foreign terrorists to maintain a high level of violence in the Valley... Pakistan has been broadly following this plan... Kashmir is being projected as a flashpoint... Pakistan has plans to escalate violence in Kashmir with a view to project that the situation is still volatile in order to sustain the international perception that it is a flash-point."

(ii) On Kargil it is stated that firing there "has been aimed at creating panic by threatening to cut off the Kargil road". In its assessment it is stated that "there may be a new militant offensive next summer".

(iii) It may be mentioned that the draft paper which was circulated before the meeting held on September 18, 1998 referred to the three phases of Operation TOPAC. During the discussion, the NSCS staff raised the question whether there was a possibility of a limited offensive in Kargil in view of heavy shelling there as well as the second phase of Operation TOPAC. The representatives of R&AW, MI and IB did not agree that Pakistan could send intruders from the North of Kargil because of the difficult terrain and the fact that the Shia population of Kargil was not likely to support the Pakistani infiltrators. The Committee, which interviewed some of those representatives who attended the above-mentioned meeting, found that while NSCS and R&AW representatives recollected the discussion, the IB and MI officials could not do so. The IB official also did not bring to the notice of the NSCS the DIB's UO of June 2, 1998. The DGMI officials stated that since they were discussing

* Operation TOPAC was the name given to a predictive analysis carried out in early 1989 by the Indian Defence Review Research Team hypothetically extrapolating what might happen in J&K. This analysis envisaged three phases—first, intensifying militancy in J&K, secondly, exertion of pressure on Kargil, Siachen and Rajouri-Poonch to reduce the pressure of Security Forces on militants in the Valley, and, thirdly, liberation of J&K.

the paper on militancy, they could not comment on the Pakistan Army's plan in J&K. While commenting on the JIC/NSCS Paper No. 7/98 on J&K Trends in Militancy, the DGMO stated in reply to the Committee that "three stages of Operation TOPAC constituted a generalised indication and could not be constituted as a specific warning about the Kargil intrusion in May, 1999".

(iv) Strategic Analysis 11/98 (J&K):⁸⁷ "The level of militant violence in Jammu & Kashmir remained high since the beginning of October with average number of incidents around 280 per month. This indicated an increase over the previous two months' average of 255 incidents per month. Greater use of RDX and IEDs has been noticed. There appears to be no dearth of weapons with militants. With the influx of foreign militants, the level of militant violence is likely to go up even during the winter months this year. Reports indicated infiltration of 1,500 foreign militants to carry out the ISI plans of weakening the security structure, creating a communal divide by whipping up fundamentalist feelings and of disrupting the democratic process."

December 1998

(i) Monthly Intelligence Review 12/98(Pak):⁸⁸ "It is speculated that Pervez Musharraf, is bolder than his predecessor and could take action against the civilian set up. Should the situation deteriorate for the short term, at least, it would be reasonable to assume that Musharraf will indeed toe the line (of Nawaz Sharif) though this may not be the case over a longer time frame." It further commented that "Pakistan blamed India for lack of progress in the settlement of contentious issues, exhorted the international community to monitor the Indo-Pak dialogue to make it result oriented, and projected Kashmir as a flashpoint."

The JIC's assessment was based on the telegrams and handing over note sent by Satish Chandra, the then Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan and presently Secretary, NSCS.⁸⁹ The following characterisation of Pervez Musharraf was clearly brought out from these communications:

(a) "an ambitious and scheming individual".

(b) "a hardliner on India and his elevation to the post of COAS may not, therefore, bode well for Indo-Pak relations", and

(c) "though the Chief of the Army Staff is the Prime Minister's nominee, unlike the President, he is not a nonentity and, on the contrary, is reputed to be a thoroughgoing professional who could turn out to be another Zia. Should, therefore, the law and order situation get out of hand for any reason or should the economy completely collapse, the Army's moves against the government either to install another civilian government or to frontally take over from the government cannot be entirely ruled out."

(ii) Monthly Intelligence Review 12/98 (J&K):⁹⁰ (a) "During this year the percentage of foreign militants went up substantially. Infiltration also increased from 1,500 in 1997 to 1,900 in 1998. It is estimated that nearly 70% of the infiltrants are foreign mercenaries. These militants seemed to operate under direct control of the ISI. Reports also indicated that a few Pak Army personnel could also be operating in J&K. Militants are increasingly using IED's and RDX with greater sophistication resulting in a higher casualty rate." Further, it is stated, "In the post-nuclear test period, the Kashmir issue came into sharper focus internationally and Pakistan launched a concerted and vigorous campaign to project it as a 'flashpoint' in the region with a view to inveigle the international community into pressurising India to give priority to this issue."

7.3 Despite the commencement of the Lahore process in February, 1999 the JIC/NSCS continued to assess that there was no change for the better in Pakistan's attitude towards India. In fact it noticed the raising of anti-India rhetoric by Pakistani leaders and continuation of the Pak game-plan in Kashmir which were reflected in SAs/MIRs. Important excerpts are given below:

February 1999

(i) Monthly Intelligence Review 02/99 (J&K):⁹¹ "Throughout the winter months there were reports of infiltration and exfiltration. However it is apprehended that infiltration may have increased during February. Militant groups are infiltrating in smaller groups of three to five, sometimes in army combat dress to avoid detection."

(ii) Monthly Intelligence Review 02/99 (Pak):⁹² The euphoria about our PM's visit to Lahore notwithstanding there appears to be no change in Pakistan's attitude towards India or towards the Kashmir issue. Soon after the Lahore Declaration, Pakistan was back on the familiar track; the significance of the Simla Agreement was belittled; the need for third party intervention to resolve the Kashmir issue for peace and security in South Asia was reiterated; and the resolve of Pakistan to continue to provide "moral, political and diplomatic support" to the Kashmiris was emphasised.

March 1999

(i) Monthly Intelligence Review 03/99 (Pak):⁹³ "In spite of their positive noises on the Lahore Declaration there has been no let up on anti-India rhetoric of Pak leaders and no basic change in their overall approach towards India and the Kashmir issue". Pak Army Chief Pervez Musharraf while talking to newsmen (March 11) stated that the talks between India and Pakistan were "just an exercise in verbosity". Later, on March 23, Musharraf indicated that there had been no change in Pakistan's Kashmir policy and that the talks with India should not be construed as a compromise on Kashmir. President Tarar...reiterated that Kashmir was critical to the survival of Pakistan and pledged Pakistan's continued moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiris...Significantly, a new committee has been formed, comprising Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz, Religious Affairs Minister, Raja Zafarul Haq, Information Minister, Mushahid Hussain and Kashmir Affairs Minister, Lieutenant General (Retd.) Abdul Majid Malik to consider the policy options on Kashmir in the context of the Lahore Declaration. Former POK Prime Minister, Sardar Abdul Qayyum would also be consulted. All the members are known hardliners and therefore any significant change in Kashmir policy may not be expected."

April 1999

(i) Strategic Analysis 04/99 (J&K):⁹⁴ "The ISI has given fresh instructions to militants to step-up the level of violence during the

summer months. It is planning to shortly infiltrate militants presently undergoing training in various camps in Pakistan and POK in small groups with sophisticated weapons and communication equipment."

(ii) Strategic Analysis 04/99 (Pak):⁹⁵ "Notwithstanding the Lahore Declaration and promises by the Pak leaders of efforts at resumption of Foreign Secretary level talks, there was an escalation in Pakistan's anti-India rhetoric, specially after the test firing of Agni-II."

Notes

1. ROD, Lieutenant Colonel P.M. Vasudevan, ex -Officer Commanding BIT, 121 Infantry Brigade, October 14, 1999. Also ROD, Lieutenant General S. Padamanabhan, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, GOC-in-C Southern Command, August 31, 1999.
2. ROD, Brigadier Satyavir Yadav, ex Commander, 121 Infantry Brigade, September 23, 1999.
3. IB UO, June 2, 1998.
4. DGMI's Response to the Committee.
5. IB's Response to the Committee.
6. DGMI's Response to the Committee.
7. 3 Infantry Division's Response to the Committee.
8. Weekly Report, R&AW, July 14, 1998.
9. DGMI's Response to the Committee.
10. 121 Infantry Brigade's Response to the Committee.
11. *Ibid.*
12. IB's Response to the Committee.
13. Fortnightly Report on J&K, IB, August 3, 1998.
14. DGMI's Response to the Committee.
15. Weekly Report, R&AW, August 4, 1998.
16. DGMO's Response to the Committee.
17. 3 Infantry Division's Response to the Committee.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. Northern Command, Monthly Intelligence Report, August 1998.
24. *Ibid.*

25. R&AW UO, September 18, 1998.
26. R&AW UO, September 30, 1998.
27. 3 Infantry Division's Response to the Committee.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. 121 Infantry Brigade's Response to the Committee.
31. *Ibid.*
32. 3 Infantry Division's Response to the Committee.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Northern Command, Monthly Intelligence Report, September 1998.
35. 3 Infantry Division's Response to the Committee.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. IB UO October 23, 1998.
40. 121 Infantry Brigade's Response to the Committee.
41. R&AW's Six-monthly Report, October 6, 1996.
42. DGMI's Response to the Committee.
43. 121 Infantry Brigade's Response to the Committee.
44. DIB's Response to the Committee.
45. 121 Infantry Brigade's Response to the Committee.
46. *Ibid.*
47. 3 Infantry Division's Response to the Committee.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*
50. BSF's Reply to the Committee.
51. DGMO.
52. 3 Infantry Division's Response to the Committee.
53. BSF's UO, December 26, 1998.
54. Northern Command's Monthly Intelligence Review, December 1998.
55. *Ibid.*
56. DIB's Response to the Committee.
57. IB's UO, January 7, 1999.
58. 121 Infantry Brigade's Response to the Committee.
59. R&AW UO, January 4, 1999.
60. Northern Command's Monthly Intelligence Review, January 1999.
61. *Ibid.*
62. R&AW UO, February 26, 1999.
63. 3 Infantry Division's Response to the Committee.
64. *Ibid.*

65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*
68. R&AW UO, March 12, 1999.
69. R&AW UO, March 19, 1999.
70. R&AW's Six-monthly Report, March 31, 1999.
71. DGMI's Response to the Committee.
72. 121 Infantry Brigade's Response to the Committee.
73. Northern Command, Monthly Intelligence Review, April 1999.
74. *Ibid.*
75. 121 Infantry Brigade's Response to the Committee.
76. IB's Daily Report, May 8, 1999.
77. ROD, Ms. Sapna Tiwari, AD, IB, dated December 9, 1999.
78. Report sent by ARC (R&AW) to the Committee, dated October 18, 1999.
79. JIC/NSCS Strategic Analysis, July 1998.
80. JIC/NSCS Monthly Intelligence Review, July 1998.
81. JIC/NSCS Strategic Analysis, September 1998.
82. JIC/NSCS Monthly Intelligence Review, September 1998.
83. JIC/NSCS Monthly Intelligence Review, October 1998.
84. JIC/NSCS Strategic Analysis, October 1998.
85. JIC/NSCS Monthly Intelligence Review (J&K), October 1998.
86. JIC/NSCS Paper, J&K: Trends in Militancy, November 1998.
87. JIC/NSCS Strategic Analysis, November 1998.
88. JIC/NSCS Monthly Intelligence Review, December 1998.
89. Handing over note of Satish Chandra, former Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan and presently Secretary, NSCS.
90. JIC/NSCS Monthly Intelligence Review, December 1998.
91. JIC/NSCS Monthly Intelligence Review (J&K), February 1999.
92. JIC/NSCS Monthly Intelligence Review (Pak), February, 1999.
93. JIC/NSCS Monthly Intelligence Review (Pak), March, 1999.
94. JIC/NSCS Strategic Analysis, April 1999.
95. JIC/NSCS Strategic Analysis, April 1999.

Chapter 8

Analysis of Intelligence Reports and Army's Response

8.1 As is evident, the Committee had before it a welter of reports from intelligence collecting and assessing agencies which had a direct or indirect bearing on the Pakistani intrusion. These can be broadly divided into two categories, strategic and tactical. Strategic intelligence assessments were made by the Joint Intelligence Committee/National Security Council Secretariat (JIC/NSCS) as well as by R&AW and pertained to Pakistani policy and intentions vis-à-vis Kashmir, the LOC and to India as a whole. Strategic military assessments were made by the DGMI. Tactical intelligence reports were area specific and related to the build up of Pakistani troops, their movements, logistic build-up including the construction of roads and bridges and ammunition dumping opposite the Kargil sector. These reports were produced by R&AW, the IB, BSF, Brigade Intelligence Teams (BITs), Divisional Intelligence Unit (DIU), Intelligence and Field Security Units (IFSUs), HQ 15 Corps and HQ Northern Command.

Strategic Indicators

8.2 A perusal of the monthly intelligence reports, strategic analyses and the JIC/NSCS paper on militancy as well as the six-monthly assessments of R&AW reveals the following:

- (a) The resumption of Foreign Secretary level talks and the Lahore process had not resulted in any softening of Pakistan's

- policy vis-à-vis India and there was no let up in Pakistani diplomatic and propaganda offensives against India, particularly on the Kashmir issue.
- (b) Pakistan's efforts continued unabated to project Kashmir as a flashpoint by raising the level of tension along the LOC.
- (c) The increase in Pakistani firing in the Kargil sector was aimed at cutting off the Srinagar-Leh road and designed to project the situation as one that might lead to war.
- (d) Pakistan had plans to intensify the proxy war in J&K by extending the arc of militancy to reduce pressure from the Security Forces on militants in the Valley. Reference was made to the second phase of Operation TOPAC. The possibility of an offensive by militant groups in the summer of 1999 was also indicated.
- (e) The aggressive mind-set of General Pervez Musharraf, who had taken over as Chief of Army Staff, was noted. That this did not bode well for India was reflected in the following developments which were duly reported:
 - (i) Three attacks by the Pakistan Army on Indian positions in Siachen in the second fortnight of October 1998.
 - (ii) Possibility of Pakistani regulars being directly involved in the J&K militancy was noted.
 - (iii) Creation of Border Action Teams comprising Kashmiri militants with ex-Pakistani Army personnel to intensify sabotage activities in J&K.
 - (iv) Increase in the number of terrorist-related incidents in J&K in October 1998.
 - (v) Increase in the financial assistance to Kashmiri militants from Rs. 4 crore per month to Rs. 5 crore per month by Pakistan despite the latter's deteriorating economy.

8.3 It was thus assessed that Pakistan's inimical policy would continue unabated. It was likely to increase support to militancy in J&K including through use of regulars and also escalate tension along the LOC in a bid to internationalise the Kashmir issue. It was also assessed that the Lahore process had in no way changed Pakistan's

intentions and policies. However, the JIC/NSCS did not assess that the Pakistani Army would intrude into and occupy unheld areas across the LOC in the Kargil sector.

8.4 The Committee identified 45 important intelligence inputs pertaining to Pakistani activities in the Kargil sector. Of these, 11 were from R&AW, nine from the IB, two from BSF, eight from BIT (121 Infantry Brigade), two from IFSU, two from 3 Infantry Division, one from 15 Corps and 10 from the Northern Command. Only 11 of these reports reached the JIC/NSCS. This must be seen against the total number of inputs received by the latter. Between June 1998 to May 1999, the JIC/NSCS received about 8,400 intelligence inputs from various agencies/organisations.

Tactical-level Indicators

8.5 The tactical inputs received between June 1998 and May 1999 are examined below:

(a) Accretion and Movement of Troops in FCNA Region Along the LOC:

In so far as number of battalions are concerned, the ORBATs of April 1998 and June 1, 1999 (including additional information sent subsequently) issued by R&AW for the FCNA region were identical. These two documents showed no accretion in the force level during one year preceding the intrusions. This notwithstanding, in July–September 1998, R&AW reported the deployment of additional artillery units and an additional unidentified unit in Gultari. This appeared to be partially corroborated by a BIT report citing the presence of additional troops in the area, including army personnel in civil dress, during July–August 1998. R&AW also reported in July 1998 that 15–20% from each company of the NLI and 69 BALUCH had been imparted commando training and deployed in forward positions. Similarly, in its six-monthly report of October 1998, R&AW reported the steady induction of more troops from peacetime locations into POK. However, in its interaction with the Committee, R&AW indicated that these inductions covered all

of POK and were not exclusively in the FCNA region. It is obvious from the foregoing that there were discrepancies in the assessments given from time to time by R&AW with regard to troop accretions in the FCNA region. Accordingly, one can only deduce that according to R&AW, at most only one additional battalion was inducted into the FCNA region in August/September 1998. It needs to be noted, however, that R&AW neither identified nor reflected the additional unit in the ORBAT issued in June 1999. The additional artillery units specified by R&AW were not interpreted as signifying an increased threat, given the enhanced level of artillery exchanges which had taken place in 1998 and were expected to continue through 1999. This was anticipated since India had brought down punitive artillery fire on Pakistani positions.

(b) Other Activity Along the LOC

(i) In December 1998, the BSF reported that fighter aircraft were frequently landing at Skardu and carrying out night-flying practice. This was discussed by the Committee with the Army and Air Force. Both indicated that such activity in this sector was normal. In the same month, an approximately three-fold increase in troop movements over the previous month was noted though this was substantially less than compared to December 1997. This was therefore not considered an indicator of any extraordinary activity. It was further reported that vehicle and animal transport movements were two-fold and nine-fold greater than those in November 1998. The assessment at that time was that the increase in such movements was on account of the relative lull in artillery firing on both sides following the earlier period of intense artillery exchanges. In February 1999, Northern Command again noted a substantial increase in troop movements over January 1999 and considerably higher movements as compared to February 1998. In addition, there were a few reports indicating construction of underground bunkers in Olthingthang and helipads at a few places. There was also a report about the establishment of a new Field Intelligence Unit (FIU) office at Olthingthang. Since similar reports in other sectors were also received by Northern Command, the reports on Kargil were not considered

particularly significant. The construction of underground bunkers was only to be expected given the very heavy artillery exchanges in the area.

(ii) There were also several reports regarding the movement of militants in the area opposite the Kargil sector. These inputs came essentially from BIT, the IB and BSF. In October 1998, BIT indicated the presence of Taliban elements opposite Kargil. In November 1998, the IB reported that militants/Taliban were being trained near Skardu, as also reported earlier by BIT, and that they were learning Balti and Ladakhi in readiness for being infiltrated into the Kargil sector some time in April 1999. The BSF reported in December 1998 that 500 Taliban who were being trained in Gurikot had been sent to Kashmir. All these reports are indicative of infiltration and not of intrusion of the type that was later undertaken by Pakistan. These reports were also sketchy and contradictory in the sense that some suggested that the militants had already been inducted into Kashmir while others suggested that they were to be inducted specifically into the Kargil sector in April 1999.

(iii) R&AW reported that between October 1998 and March 1999, General Pervez Musharraf visited the FCNA region on two occasions and Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, once. Undue significance could not be attached to such visits given the fact that Kashmir is the core issue for Pakistan and in view of unrest then prevailing in the FCNA region. General Musharraf's October 1998 visit was in fact quite natural since he had just taken over as COAS and visits to forward units were only to be expected. Moreover, he had a special interest in the FCNA region, having commanded an SSG unit in the area in the mid-1980s.

(c) Logistic Build-up

(i) There were reports indicating construction of a suspension bridge at Khol, improvement of the Shaqma-Shirting road and improvement of a track opposite Batalik in September 1998. There were also reports of hospital facilities being created at Kel and preparations for the evacuation of casualties by helicopters in February 1999. However, there were no reports regarding the establishment of any

new administrative bases in forward areas. All these were seen by the Indian Army as routine activities.

(ii) There were a few reports indicating increased dumping of ammunition. R&AW reported that one lakh kg of ammunition was being carried by civilian contractors to posts in Gultari, Hassan and Javed and an unspecified quantity of ammunition to forward posts in the Gomothang area in September 1998. Later reports also indicated the dumping of ammunition at other forward areas but these lacked specificity. The Indian Army assessed that the dumping of ammunition was for winter stocking and was not unnatural given the earlier heavy artillery exchanges in this sector.

Assessment by the Committee

8.6 Owing to difficulties in the collection of intelligence inputs, most assessments have to be made on the basis of incomplete information. In the absence of all relevant data, the assessment process aims at adjudging the probability of the course of events. Such assessments are made both formally and informally at various levels in the Government, within the Armed Forces and by the agencies. In the Government, the assessment is made exclusively by the JIC/NSCS. Given the composition and the level of this body, it is appropriately tasked to make broad strategic assessments. R&AW makes periodic strategic assessments which are reflected in its half-yearly reports and special reports. Within the Army, military assessments are made at all levels. These might be strategic-cum-tactical at higher levels, but will only be tactical at the level of Corps headquarters and below. Tactical assessments relate largely to the adversary's likely intentions and actions at the local level. In the situation in which the Indian Armed Forces have been deployed in J&K, they are also required to make assessments in situations of no-war-no-peace. These involve exchanges of fire and attacks on positions which take place from time to time in Siachen, along the International Border as well as across the LOC. In the last nine to ten years, there has been massive infiltration of Pakistani terrorists into the Kashmir Valley and Jammu. There have also been some attempts at infiltration in the Kargil sector, most notably in 1993.¹

8.7 As mentioned earlier, the assessments made by the intelligence agencies/DGMI did not foresee the possibility of the kind of intrusions made by Pakistan in the Kargil sector. What was envisaged was increased infiltration, more artillery shelling and possibly enhanced militant activity in this sector as well as elsewhere in Jammu and Kashmir. The assessments of the JIC/NSCS were made on the basis of such intelligence inputs as were available from the agencies and the Indian Mission in Islamabad. The inputs on Kargil were limited and constituted only about 25 per cent of the total number of important inputs generated. Further, these were routine inputs and no special reports were sent either by the civil intelligence collecting agencies or DGMI. The Committee also did not come across any assessment made by the DGMI which could indicate a possibility of this kind of intrusion in the Kargil sector. It was noted that the DGMI had many of the inputs given in Chapter 7.

8.8 The Committee has examined whether the possibility of intrusions in the Kargil sector could have been foreseen by JIC/NSCS if it had all the 45 inputs that were generated between May 1998 and April 1999, and had knowledge of the existence of unheld gaps in this sector. Theoretically, and with the benefit of hindsight, one can argue that it could have been foreseen. However, the Committee has taken into account the structure of the assessment process and the lack of any politico-strategic interaction within it. It is quite possible that if a sophisticated politico-military game had been played with the participation not only of military personnel but foreign policy and area specialists familiar with the Pakistani psyche, there may have been some possibility of such an assessment emerging. The building of the Berlin Wall was foreseen in a politico-military game prior to 1961 but was discounted. The Committee is aware of a politico-military game played in the Pentagon in March 1965 which was able to accurately predict the Indo-Pakistan crisis of 1965 though it placed its likely occurrence in 1966. However, such processes have not been developed in this country. Therefore, at each level, the assessments tried to fit the available data into a familiar past pattern. It must also be admitted that nothing in the available data was of a kind which could not be fitted into patterns of increased

artillery exchanges, infiltration by militants and attempts to capture some posts along the LOC.

8.9 To make a military assessment of a possible intrusion in strength across the LOC, some essential indicators would be needed. These are, the induction of additional forces, an improvement in communications, a build up of logistics, the development in infrastructure and the forward deployment of forces. The Committee went into the question of whether such tangible indicators were available to the Army during 1998-99. It has come to the conclusion that the available intelligence inputs at that time at best indicated the presence of one additional unidentified battalion at Gultari. However, there was no confirmation of this report, nor was it clear whether this was an additional induction or just a deployment forward of one of the battalions already in the FCNA region. Similarly, other critical indicators like an improvement in communications and logistics, essential for an intrusion in strength, were also missing. Much has been made of intelligence inputs to the effect that one lakh kilograms of ammunition was dumped in the area and 500 snow boots acquired. One lakh kilograms of ammunition amounts to no more than about 1,500-2,000 rounds of artillery ammunition of various types. This is but a very small fraction of the total amount of ammunition expended in the artillery exchanges in this sector in 1998. Similarly, the acquisition of 500 pairs of snow boots was hardly significant, given the fact that three brigades of the Pakistani Army are stationed in the area.

8.10 The Committee examined the information that is now available on the basis of the documents captured by the Indian Army during the Kargil operations and POW interrogation reports. This information when compared with the ORBAT supplied by R&AW in April 1998 and reconfirmed in June 1999 reveals several discrepancies. R&AW could not identify the presence of 3 NLI and 5 NLI with 62 Infantry Brigade and 6 NLI, 13 NLI and 24 SIND with 80 Infantry Brigade. The failure to correctly identify as many as five infantry battalions deployed right across the LOC was a serious lapse. The movements of these battalions into the area were not reported. The de-induction of three battalions, namely, 2 NLI, 4 NLI and 9 NLI, was also missed. Subsequently, 4 NLI

returned in February 1999 (Annexure 5:2). The inability to detect these changes is a sad commentary on the availability of intelligence across the LOC. If so many units could not be identified, there could be no realistic expectation of hard intelligence of the Pakistan Army's plans to move across the LOC during the winter. There is no firm indication about when these inductions and de-inductions took place. This also raises the questions about the quality of communication intelligence monitoring in this area. There should have been some indications by way of communication intelligence on the identity and location of these "missing" battalions. A more realistic assessment may have been possible if information about the induction/forward movement of these five units had been available. Yet the Committee has to concede that even this information might not necessarily have led to the forecasting of the type of intrusion that took place. If increased Pakistani attention in this area had been correctly evaluated by R&AW, it would have been incumbent on them to use all the resources available to them to step up further intelligence collection in this area through more intensive wireless monitoring resources, ARC flights, etc.

8.11 As detailed in Chapter 5 both in its ORBAT of April 1998 and amended June 1999 ORBAT, R&AW projected a total of 13 battalions in the FCNA region. The DGMI's own assessment was that there were 14 battalions in early May 1999. In the light of these facts, the Committee finds that while the DGMI had a better appreciation of the strength of the Pakistani forces in the Kargil sector, the process of interaction between the two leaves much to be desired. The Committee notes with regret that even as a major military intrusion was under way and action had been joined, R&AW's assessment of the overall force level in the FCNA region was lower than previously assessed. There are no procedures by which major differences in regard to their ORBAT estimates by R&AW and DGMI could have been resolved at the level of the JIC/NSCS. Nor was there any initiative taken by the DGMI through the JIC/NSCS to resolve the discrepancies.

8.12 The Committee examined the data on movement of infantry battalions reflected under "Enhanced Threat Perception" in Brigadier Surinder Singh's briefing notes for the visit of the COAS

to his brigade sector in August 1999 (Appendix A), as well as the elaborations made by the Brigadier in his interaction with the Committee (Appendix B). This examination shows that in his briefing notes, Brigadier Surinder Singh had reflected three moves, namely, forward deployment of one infantry battalion (24 SIND) within the FCNA region from Gilgit to Olthingthang; move and deployment of one unidentified infantry battalion into a routine summer posture either from resources within the FCNA region or by induction from outside the sector; and the induction of one battalion into the FCNA region from outside the sector. Questioned by the Committee he could not say as to who had provided him this information but felt that it could have been HQ 3 Infantry Division, IFSU or BIT. The Committee has co-related this data with the information contained in the relevant intelligence reports for the period May 1998 to April 1999, and finds that the two do not tally in that the intelligence reports reflect only the move of one unidentified additional battalion into Gilgit and that also in the report dated September 1998. The Committee has also studied the data contained in Brigadier Surinder Singh's briefing notes in relation to the information on moves/induction/de-induction of battalions now compiled by the Committee on the basis of captured diaries/documents and POW Interrogation Reports (Appendix D). From this it emerges that, prior to August 1998 when Brigadier Surinder Singh briefed the COAS, only one infantry battalion had in fact moved forward from a rear location within the FCNA region. The other movements reflected in the Committee's assessment as contained in Chapter 5 (induction of one infantry battalion from outside the FCNA region and the forward deployment of another infantry battalion within the region), took place between the period October 1998 to February 1999, much after Brigadier Surinder Singh had briefed the COAS. The obvious conclusion is that Brigadier Surinder Singh's briefing notes were based on information for which he is unable to provide a basis how he came by it at the time of his briefing to the COAS.

8.13 This area had not seen large scale infiltration in previous years except for one major intrusion in 1993 in which the Pakistanis suffered 27 casualties.² However, in the light of various intelligence reports dealing with the training of militants, there was anticipation

of increased infiltration in this sector during 1999 especially targeted at Mashkoh, the Padam and Suru Valleys and other nalas. This expectation was assessed and accepted at the Corps, Divisional and 121 Infantry Brigade level. Consequently, an additional brigade of two battalions (70 Infantry Brigade) was earmarked for deployment in the Dras–Mashkoh sector to deal with infiltration in the summer of 1999. In fact, this Brigade was in the process of deploying and taking over part of its responsibilities from 121 Infantry Brigade when the intrusion in Batalik was detected in early May 1999. Further, at the Corps level, the possibility of Pakistan attempting to capture some posts in the summer months was also assessed as evident from the statement of the acting GOC 15 Corps at a press conference in Srinagar on January 11, 1999.

8.14 In his first interaction with the Committee, Brigadier Surinder Singh who commanded 121 Infantry Brigade and in whose sector the intrusions were detected, specifically made the point that he did not differ with the threat assessment handed down to him at the time of taking over his command. Even after receiving various intelligence reports of activities opposite him, “he continued to consider that the threat was limited to infiltration of militants along with heavy artillery firing to interdict the road. At no stage was the intrusion of the type that ultimately occurred considered likely. But that they would ‘push militants across the LOC’ was considered and included in the brief for COAS.” Elaborating further, Brigadier Surinder Singh stated that the rationale behind his projecting the requirement of certain additional resources to the COAS during the latter’s visit to the sector in August 1998 was that “since there was enhanced activity across the LOC with an infiltration threat, his aim was to project requirement of resources for further monitoring and gaining of confirmed information about this activity.” In his petition to the Corps Commander on June 15, 1999, he stated, “that the very concept of a large scale enemy intrusion/invasion, with a view to hold territory has never been discussed at any forum, including war games at every level. The entire thrust has been towards infiltration and not an invasion. To this end, all surveillance whether aerial or by patrols has concentrated on possible routes of infiltration, viz., nalas and not ridgelines. This holds good for summer too.

...The area the enemy has occupied is unheld and has been so for decades. It was always thought that these heights are more difficult than Siachen Glacier to operate on and to hold. This has been the perception at all levels, I had no inputs to need to change this perception. The Army Commander, during his inaugural visit to my Brigade Sector stayed for three days and had numerous tactical discussions with the GOC and me, but the threat of an intrusion was never discussed. Even during the visit of the DGMO as late as May 5, 1999, no inkling of the impending action by the enemy was given to me. Nevertheless, I took a lot of additional precautions and initiated a lot of measures to strengthen my Brigade Sector and to safeguard the LOC. I feel that if I was given the resources that I had asked for, then this intrusion could never have taken place. It is obvious that the resources were not given because no one up the chain right up to Army HQ, had any idea of the enemy attempting an operation of this scale and magnitude. This is basically an intelligence failure at the National level, for which I am being made a scapegoat.”³

8.15 In his subsequent interactions with the Committee, Brigadier Surinder Singh stated that he had developed concern towards the end of 1998 regarding the vulnerability of the Dras sector. He apprehended that completion of the by-pass being constructed South of NH-1A would no longer enable Pakistani artillery to interdict the Srinagar–Leh road from across the LOC. He, therefore, felt that the enemy might attempt to capture some territory in the Dras sector in order to interdict the new by-pass. He had accordingly incorporated this possibility in a war game played by Brigade HQ in January 1999 and had communicated the results to Divisional HQ for consideration.⁴ He was asked by the Committee whether he anticipated such a development as an immediate or long term threat. His answer was that he saw this as an immediate threat. He said he felt that something might happen but he could not clearly visualise what that might be. The Committee then asked him that if he anticipated so imminent and serious a threat, was it not his responsibility as the Brigade Commander to launch protective patrols on vulnerable features and reconnaissance patrols into the unheld gaps even in adverse snow conditions despite attendant risks. He replied that

had he done so and had there been casualties on account of avalanches or cold injuries without these patrols discovering anything alarming, he would have been held responsible. Therefore, weighing the risk of casualties against the perceived threat, the dimensions and nature of which he was not clear, he felt he would not be justified in taking such an initiative. Therefore, patrolling was limited to the normal routine of beating tracks and moving forward as far as possible. In a few cases they were unable to make significant headway. Perhaps his decision under those conditions of uncertainty was rational, but the Committee could not help noting that Commander 121 Brigade did not read the threat at that stage as being serious enough to warrant high-risk snow patrolling.⁵

8.16 Brigadier Surinder Singh mentioned during briefings to various visiting officers that in any future conflict, "Kargil will be the decision point and not Siachen. There was a possibility of a tactical nuclear strike on Kargil by the enemy as it was a purely military target, collateral damage could be caused to the Shia population about which Pakistan was not concerned and supplies to the Ladakh sector could be cut off. This would also coincide with the Chinese interest in eastern Ladakh."⁶

8.17 All commanders deployed on the frontline develop concerns about the possibilities of various types of enemy action within their respective areas of responsibility. Such concerns have to be viewed within the framework of the overall strategic military threat assessment made at appropriate higher levels. It would thus be only prudent for a formation commander to look for additional intelligence across his immediate front and within the resources available to his higher commanders or which can be reasonably made available to him. In Brigadier Surinder Singh's case, he was demanding resources for further monitoring and gaining of information about enemy activity across the LOC which the nation as a whole did not have—satellite imagery of adequate resolution and UAVs which could function at the Kargil heights. Some of his concerns such as that of a tactical nuclear strike and the demands made by him as cited above appear to have been quite unreasonable. Accordingly, he could not be taken seriously by his superiors. At the same time, his actions on the ground particularly patrolling, which were entirely within his

own resources, did not match his expressed concerns. He was not prepared to take the slightest risk by mounting winter patrols in relation to areas of his concern. The Committee is of the view that many of his statements reflected an attempt at ex-post-facto rationalisation.

8.18 The Committee feels that these intrusions could have been detected earlier if India had half-metre resolution satellite imagery capability, appropriate UAVs and better HUMINT. The satellite imageries available within the country were of a lower capability by an order of magnitude and UAVs which could operate satisfactorily at the Kargil heights were unavailable. As regards HUMINT, most cross-border human intelligence efforts of R&AW, the IB, BSF, BITs and IFSUs come to a total standstill during the winter months. Therefore, the only source of worthwhile intelligence in the FCNA region during winter would be human intelligence with sophisticated communication capability. Unfortunately, R&AW reduced its assets in this area in 1978 as a result of a general cut in its programme as part of an overall cut by the then Government. It thereafter never felt it necessary to make good that deficiency. Neither human intelligence nor communication intelligence nor imagery intelligence in the FCNA region was adequate.

8.19 The contents of the captured diary of Captain Hussain Ahmad of 12 NLI, in the Mashkoh sector, shows that when the Indian helicopter carrying the Deputy Commander of 121 Infantry Brigade passed over one of their locations in March 1999, he had recorded its passage and expressed fears about their being sighted. The helicopter in fact could not sight them because of the inherent limitations on observation from such flights and because of the camouflage clothing worn by the intruders and other factors. The Committee noted that ever since the induction of WASO flights, they have turned up little if any information. The Committee also noted that after the intrusions were detected in the Batalik sector, a number of WASO flights were flown over Dras and Mashkoh sub-sectors to see if any intrusions had taken place in those sub-sectors. These flights could not detect anything in the initial stages. It was only after they were ordered to fly low (much below the 1,000 ft ceiling laid down for peace time helicopter flying) and they were

fired upon, that the intrusion was detected in the Mashkoh sub-sector. The limitations of WASO patrols should have been brought to the notice of all concerned much earlier. In that case some remedial measure could have been sought to be initiated to install more sophisticated sensors.

8.20 Strategic surprise comes from actions that are not anticipated by the adversary. In this particular case, strategic surprise was achieved by Pakistan because this area had been free of LOC violations over a long period of time and was considered unsuitable for military operations, especially during winter. One significant infiltration operation undertaken by Pakistan in 1993 ended in their total rout. There was perhaps an unarticulated assumption in the military mind that a rational commander would not risk his troops at such avalanche-prone altitudes during winter. Captured diaries indicate that the Pakistani intruders suffered heavy avalanche casualties in Mashkoh in March 1999. Surprise was achieved by Pakistan by carrying out an operation considered unviable and irrational by Indian Army commanders. A determined foe can always achieve surprise provided he has clear objectives, is prepared to take risks and has the advantage of timing and operational flexibility. India itself was able to surprise the US and the international community with its nuclear tests on May 11, 1998. The US has sophisticated surveillance capability but the Indian scientists cleverly used the time-gaps in the passage of the American satellite over the Pokhran test site to achieve surprise. In Kargil, Pakistan achieved surprise by moving into unheld gaps without generating any significant, observable activity during the preceding months of preparation on its own side of the LOC.

Notes

1. ROD with Lieutenant General S. Padmanabhan, August 31, 1999.
2. ROD with Brigadier (Retd.) Ashok Malhotra, November 11, 1999.
3. Brig Surinder Singh's (Commander of 121 Infantry Brigade) letter to Corps Commander, June 15, 1999.
4. ROD with Brigadier Surinder Singh, October 14–15, 1999.
5. ROD with Brigadier Surinder Singh, November 15–17, 1999.
6. ROD with Brigadier Surinder Singh, October 14–15, 1999.

Chapter 9

Security Implications of Trends in India's Defence Expenditure

9.1 An important question that has been discussed among security experts is whether India's declining defence expenditure, over the past several years, with its consequent adverse impact on preparedness, was in any way responsible for Kargil. A related issue is the adequacy of resources available to the defence forces to wage war in the forbidden mountainous terrain that characterises the Kargil sector. This Chapter attempts to address these and other related issues in regard to the country's defence expenditure.

9.2 For the first 15 years after India's Independence, defence allocations received low priority and hovered around 1.80% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). India's debacle in the Sino-Indian war of 1962 is widely attributed, inter alia, to the prolonged neglect of India's defence forces. Learning from experience, defence outlays were increased significantly and vigorous efforts were made to improve the country's defence capability. During the year 1961–62, defence expenditure at Rs. 314.92 crore constituted only 1.83% of GDP; in the following two years it was raised by 50% and 72%, constituting 2.56% and 3.84% of the country's GDP, respectively.

9.3 For nearly 25 years after 1962, the average annual share of defence allocations was around 3% of GDP. An important factor that helped India's defence preparedness during the period was its access to defence equipment from the Soviet sources on soft credit and at prices which were often significantly cheaper than the market prices. By 1987–88, defence expenditure as a proportion of GDP

had risen to its highest level of 3.59%. This rise needs to be seen in the context of the comparatively higher cost of weapons and manpower, the deteriorating security environment following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the massive build up of Pakistan's armed forces. Table 1 shows India's defence expenditure since 1947-48 along with the percentage change in each successive year.

*Table 1: India's Defence Expenditure Since 1947-48
(at current prices)*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Defence Expenditure (Rs. in Crore)</i>	<i>Percentage Increase Over Previous Year</i>
1947-48	189	
1948-49	136	-27.89
1949-50	161	18.01
1950-51	170	5.97
1951-52	193	13.42
1952-53	215	11.38
1953-54	215	0.00
1954-55	223	3.97
1955-56	225	0.76
1956-57	230	2.31
1957-58	276	19.97
1958-59	305	10.46
1959-60	275	-9.74
1960-61	310	12.56
1961-62	315	1.59
1962-63	474	50.49
1963-64	816	72.21
1964-65	806	-1.26
1965-66	885	9.80
1966-67	909	2.69
1967-68	968	6.59
1968-69	1033	6.69
1969-70	1101	6.55
1970-71	1199	8.94
1971-72	1525	27.19
1972-73	1652	8.32

Table 1 contd.

Table 1 contd.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Defence Expenditure (Rs. in Crore)</i>	<i>Percentage Increase Over Previous Year</i>
1973-74	1681	1.73
1974-75	2112	25.67
1975-76	2472	17.04
1976-77	2563	3.65
1977-78	2634	2.77
1978-79	2868	8.88
1979-80	3356	17.02
1980-81	3867	15.23
1981-82	4652	20.30
1982-83	5408	16.26
1983-84	6309	16.66
1984-85	7136	13.11
1985-86	7987	11.93
1986-87	10477	31.17
1987-88	11967	14.22
1988-89	13341	11.48
1989-90	14416	8.06
1990-91	15426	7.01
1991-92	16347	5.97
1992-93	17582	7.55
1993-94	21845	24.25
1994-95	23245	6.41
1995-96	26856	15.53
1996-97	29505	9.86
1997-98	35278	19.57
1998-99(RE)	41200	16.79
1999-2000 (BE)	45694	10.91

Source: Ministry of Defence.

9.4 Defence expenditure is ordinarily projected in terms of current prices. This is the usual method employed in budgeting and expenditure accounting. However, expressed in these terms, defence expenditure does not indicate either its capacity to buy defence capability or the burden it imposes on the economy. Hence, it is desirable to analyse defence expenditure variously in terms of constant prices, as a percentage of GDP, as a proportion of Central Government Expenditure (CGE) and in real terms, that is, of purchasing power. The computation of defence expenditure in real terms is, however, beset with difficulties as it involves the application of relevant deflators which influence defence spending, including inflation and currency fluctuations. India's defence expenditure since 1961–62 computed as a percentage of GDP and as a proportion of Central Government Expenditure is shown in Table 2.

9.5 India's defence expenditure declined, as a proportion of the country's GDP, over the last 13 years from 3.59% in 1987–88 to 2.28% in 1999–2000 (budgeted outlay). While it increased almost four times over this period in terms of current prices, the increase in constant prices has been far less. As a percentage of Total Government Expenditure (TGE) it has progressively declined. Table 3 indicates these trends since 1987–88.

9.6 Defence expenditure had declined to a mere 2.09% of GDP in 1996–97. Thus, in the past 13 years, the share of defence expenditure as a percentage of GDP saw an overall decline of 35.65%. This reduction was effected at a time when India's GDP growth rate during 1990–94 was relatively low. At the same time, the Rupee depreciated sharply against the US Dollar (and other foreign currencies) in 1991, 1995 and again in 1998, from Rs. 17.94 in 1990–91 to Rs. 42.24 in June 1998.

Table 2: India: Defence Expenditure Statistics

Year	Defence Expenditure (bn. Rs.)	GDP Current Market Prices (bn. Rs.)	Population (mns)	Defence Forces 1000s	Central Government Expenditure (CGE)	DE/GDP (%)	DE/CGE (%)
1961–62	3.1492	171.77	455.0	490	14.765	1.83	21.33
1962–63	4.7391	184.76	459.0	562	23.525	2.56	20.14
1963–64	8.1612	212.37	462.0	585	32.062	3.84	25.45
1964–65	8.0580	247.65	470.0	867	34.889	3.25	23.10
1965–66	8.8476	261.45	470.0	869	39.406	3.38	22.45
1966–67	9.0859	295.71	495.0	879	44.584	3.07	20.38
1967–68	9.6843	346.11	514.0	977	44.972	2.80	21.53
1968–69	10.3319	366.74	529.0	990	45.258	2.82	22.83
1969–70	11.0088	403.87	541.0	925	49.947	2.73	25.63
1970–71	11.9928	431.63	554.0	930	53.766	2.78	21.51
1971–72	15.2534	462.53	566.0	980	67.096	3.30	22.73
1972–73	16.5223	510.05	579.0	960	78.493	3.24	21.05
1973–74	16.8079	620.07	591.0	948	81.308	2.71	20.67
1974–75	21.1227	732.35	604.0	956	97.849	2.88	21.59
1975–76	24.7229	787.61	617.0	956	120.365	3.14	20.54

Table 2 contd.

Table 2 contd.

Year	Defence Expenditure (bn. Rs.)	GDP Current Market Prices (bn. Rs.)	Population (mn)	Defence Forces 1000s	Central Government Expenditure (CGE)	DE/GDP (%)	DE/CGE (%)
1976-77	25.6253	848.94	630.0	1,055	131.501	3.02	19.49
1977-78	26.3364	960.67	643.0	1,096	149.856	2.74	18.77
1978-79	28.6763	1,041.90	661.0	1,096	177.172	2.75	17.27
1979-80	33.5563	1,143.56	674.0	1,096	185.043	2.93	19.18
1980-81	38.6677	1,360.13	689.0	1,104	224.948	2.84	18.71
1981-82	46.5180	1,597.60	704.0	1,104	254.012	2.91	18.31
1982-83	54.0830	1,781.32	720.0	1,120	304.937	3.04	17.74
1983-84	63.0917	2,075.89	736.0	1,250	359.877	3.04	17.53
1984-85	71.3600	2,313.43	752.0	1,380	438.789	3.08	15.26
1985-86	79.8749	2,622.43	768.0	1,380	531.124	3.05	15.04
1986-87	104.7746	2,929.49	784.0	1,380	640.231	3.58	16.37
1987-88	119.6749	3,332.01	800.0	1,380	703.046	3.59	17.02
1988-89	133.4102	3,957.82	812.0	1,360	814.023	3.37	16.39
1989-90	144.1617	4,568.21	825.0	1,260	950.494	3.17	15.26
1990-91	154.2648	5,355.34	843.0	1,200	1,040.729	2.88	14.70

Table 2 contd.

Table 2 contd.

Year	Defence Expenditure (bn. Rs.)	GDP Current Market Prices (bn. Rs.)	Population (mn)	Defence Forces 1000s	Central Government Expenditure (CGE)	DE/GDP (%)	DE/CGE (%)
1991-92	163.4704	6,167.99	858.0	1,200	1,127.307	2.65	14.50
1992-93	175.8179	7,059.18	877.0	1,150	1,259.269	2.49	13.96
1993-94	218.4473	8,107.49	892.0	1,100	1,457.880	2.69	14.75
1994-95	232.4523	10,378.42	910.0	1,100	1,669.984	2.24	13.92
1995-96	268.5629	12,179.63	934.2	1,100	1,852.328	2.21	14.01
1996-97	295.0508	14,098.49	950.6	1,145	2,112.596	2.09	13.58
1997-98	352.7799	15,635.52	973.9	1,145	2,320.680	2.26	15.20
1998-99	412.0000 RE	17,700.35E	981.0	1,100	2,819.120RE	2.33	14.61
1999-2000	456.9400 BE	20,001.39E	995.0	1,100	2,838.820 BE	2.28	16.10

Notes: 1. The statistics above have been sourced from an IDSA Study/MOD.

2. The revised GDP figures from 1993-94 to 1997-98 are in accordance with *The Economic Survey 1998-99*, Govt. of India, 1999.

3. Defence expenditure figures as a percentage of GDP and Central Government Expenditure differ marginally from those cited in the 1998-99 Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence Report (Second Report) published by Lok Sabha Secretariat due to minor differences in basic data. However, these do not affect the overall trend.

Table 3: Defence Expenditure

Year	Current (Rs. crore)	Constant 1980-81 (Rs. crore)	% of GDP	% of TGE
1987-88	11,967.49	6,881.31	3.59	10.67
1988-89	13,341.02	7,097.42	3.37	10.26
1989-90	14,416.00	7,092.76	3.17	11.09
1990-91	15,426.48	6,833.93	2.88	8.74
1991-92	16,347.04	6,309.96	2.65	8.20
1992-93	17,581.79	6,259.12	2.49	7.82
1993-94	21,844.73	7,099.54	2.49	8.45
1994-95	23,245.23	6,857.34	2.24	7.73
1995-96	26,856.29	7,331.77	2.21	7.89
1996-97	29,505.08	7,582.81	2.09	7.68
1997-98	35,277.99	8,572.55	2.26	7.92
1998-99 (RE)	41,200.00	9,599.60	2.33	NA
1999-2000 (BE)	45,694.00	10,372.54	2.28	NA

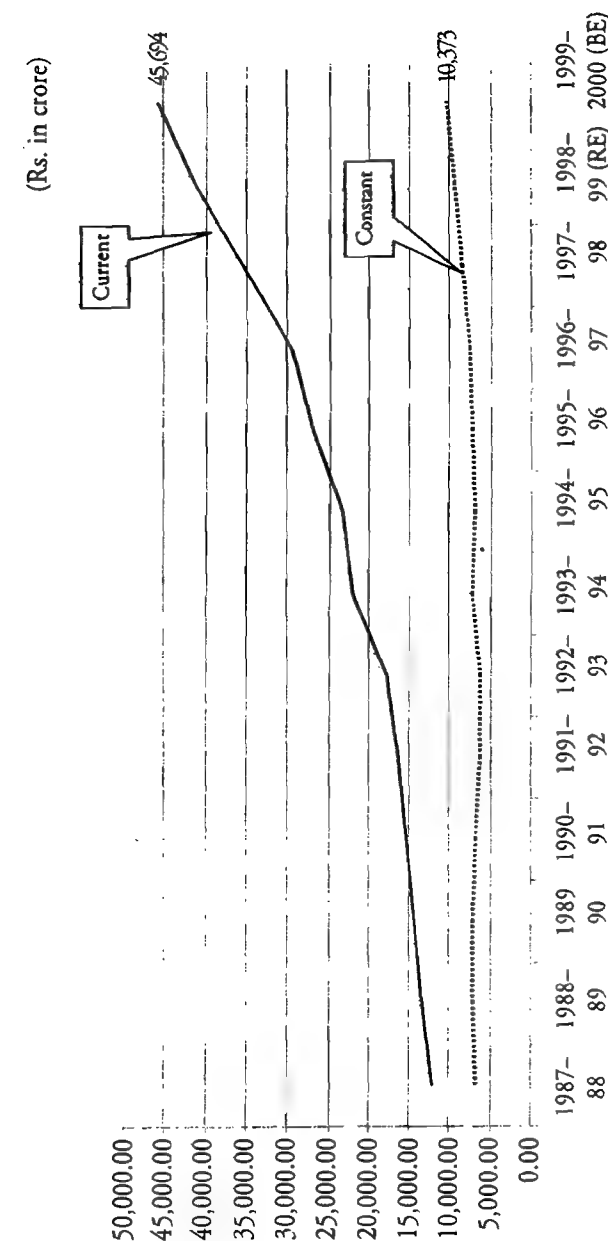
Source: IDSA.

Defence Expenditure at Constant Prices

9.7 An analogous picture of defence expenditure emerges in terms of constant prices. During 1988-89, defence expenditure amounted to Rs. 13,341.02 crore which, at constant (1980-81) prices, amounted to Rs. 7,097.42 crore (see Table 3). In terms of current prices, defence expenditure had by 1994-95, risen to nearly twice this amount and stood at Rs. 23,245.23 crore. However, in terms of constant prices, its value registered a decrease of over 3% to Rs. 6,857.34 crore. For 1999-2000, the Budget Estimates at current prices amount to Rs. 45,694.00 crore while, at constant prices, the total outlay will be only Rs. 10,372.54 crore. Figure 1 indicates the widening gap of defence expenditure in terms of current and constant prices.

It needs to be noted, however, that with the exception of 1994-95, from 1993-94 onwards, defence expenditure has been increasing in real terms as its growth has been greater than the rate of inflation.

Figure 1
Defence Expenditure
(Current vs Constant)



Defence Expenditure as a Percentage of Central Government Expenditure

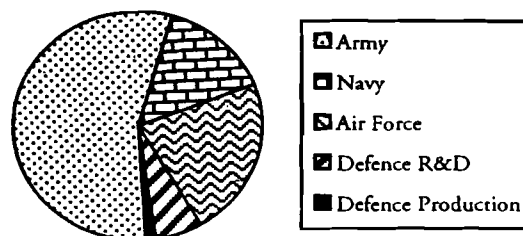
9.8 Till about 1972–73, defence expenditure amounted to nearly 21% of Central Government Expenditure (CGE). After the 1971 war, the probability of another conventional war was assessed to be somewhat low. It was therefore felt that higher defence expenditure was unnecessary. Given this widely shared view, defence expenditure as a proportion of Central Government Expenditure came down to around 17.4% during 1977–78 to 1986–87. In the following decade, it has further declined to 14.80% (see Table 2).

9.9 Viewing defence expenditure as a percentage of Central Government Expenditure is useful but does not give any indication of the Central Government's capacity to absorb a higher defence outlay. Defence expenditure is a part of the Government of India's (GOI) non-Plan expenditure. A large part of this expenditure is committed to interest payments, subsidies, pension, grants to States and salaries (excluding the Railways, Defence, Posts and Telecom). Of the balance, with respect to which some flexibility is available, defence expenditure has constituted more than 50%. Table 4 clarifies this position.

Service/Department-wise Defence Expenditure

9.10 As a percentage of total defence outlay, expenditure on defence R&D has been rising. Since 1985–86 it has increased from 3.94% of the total outlay to 6.07% in 1999–2000. The Army's share has been increasing and is now (BE 1999–2000) over 55% of the defence

Figure 2: Percentage Shares



Source: IDSA Study.

Table 4: Defence Expenditure as a Percentage of Non-Plan Central Government Expenditure

Year	Non-Plan Central Expenditure	Interest	Subsidies	Pension	Grants to States	Salaries Excluding Railways, Defence, Posts and Telecom	Total Difference	Total Defence Expenditure	Percentage	
1992-93	85958	31075	11995	3005	2645	4639	53359	32599	17582	53.93
1993-94	98998	36741	12682	3338	2405	5221	60387	38611	21845	56.57
1994-95	113361	44060	12932	3643	2334	5665	68634	44727	23245	51.97
1995-96	131901	50045	13372	4277	5967	5908	79569	52332	26856	51.32
1996-97	147473	59478	16364	5094	6230	6898	94064	53409	29505	55.24
1997-98	172991	65637	19487	6881	4416	9376	105797	67194	35278	52.50
1998-99 (RE)	213541	77248	24684	10053	4534	11181	127700	85841	41200	48.00
1999-2000 (BE)	231883	88000	23828	10131	8159	12079	142197	89686	45694	50.95

Source: Ministry of Defence.

budget. The increasing trend in the Army's expenditure and the decline in defence production expenditure is attributable mainly to a change in accounting procedures. The increase in the Army's expenditure from 1995–96 to 1998–99, however, is on account of increased burden of Pay and Allowances consequent to the Fifth Central Pay Commission and also on account of higher procurement of stores and modernisation. The percentage shares of the Army, Navy, Air Force, defence R&D and defence production in the Budget Estimates for 1999–2000 are 55.29%, 14.80%, 22.49%, 6.07% and 1.35%, respectively.

Pensions

9.11 Primarily as a result of the increase in the colour service of Armed Forces' personnel involving payment of pensions, the pension bill has been mounting since the mid-1980s. With the implementation of the Fourth Central Pay Commission's recommendations, the defence pension bill—which is provided for outside the defence budget—rose to Rs. 2,119 crore, in 1992–93 a sum equivalent to 12.01% of the defence budget. This proportion is significantly higher than the corresponding figure of 2.86% during the 1960s. The total outlay for defence pensions in 1999–2000 is Rs. 7,345.07 crore or equivalent to 16.07% of defence expenditure (see Table 5).

Table 5: Pensions

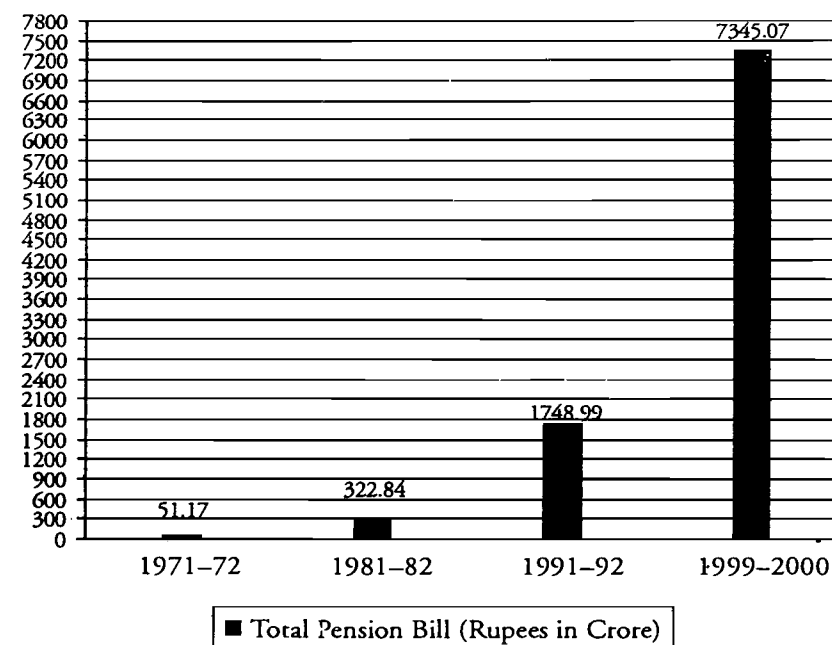
Year	Pensions (Rs. in Crore)	% of Defence Expenditure
1990–91	1,668.99	10.81
1991–92	1,748.99	10.69
1992–93	2,118.99	12.01
1993–94	2,529.75	11.58
1994–95	2,719.98	11.70
1995–96	3,196.10	11.90
1996–97	3,679.48	12.47
1997–98	4,943.87	14.01
1998–99	7,266.77	17.63
1999–2000	7,345.07	16.07

Source: IDSA.

The pension cost for the year 1999–2000 is, in fact, expected to exceed Rs. 11,000 crore after the demand for the supplementary grants is approved.

9.12 This is more than six times the 1990–91 pension bill of Rs. 1,668.99 crore. During 1994–99, the pension bill increased at an average annual rate of 24.29%. In the future, if the Government has to provide reasonable retirement benefits to servicemen, the pension bill is likely to go up even higher. It is noteworthy that the Army's pension bill, which was equivalent to 13.75% of Pay and Allowances in 1971–72 and to 45.45% by 1990–91, has now gone up to nearly 64%. Given this trend, the cost of retired personnel may well exceed what is being spent on those in active service. This trend underscores the urgent need for a review of current manpower policies. Figure 3 below shows the rise in pension costs during the decades of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

Figure 3



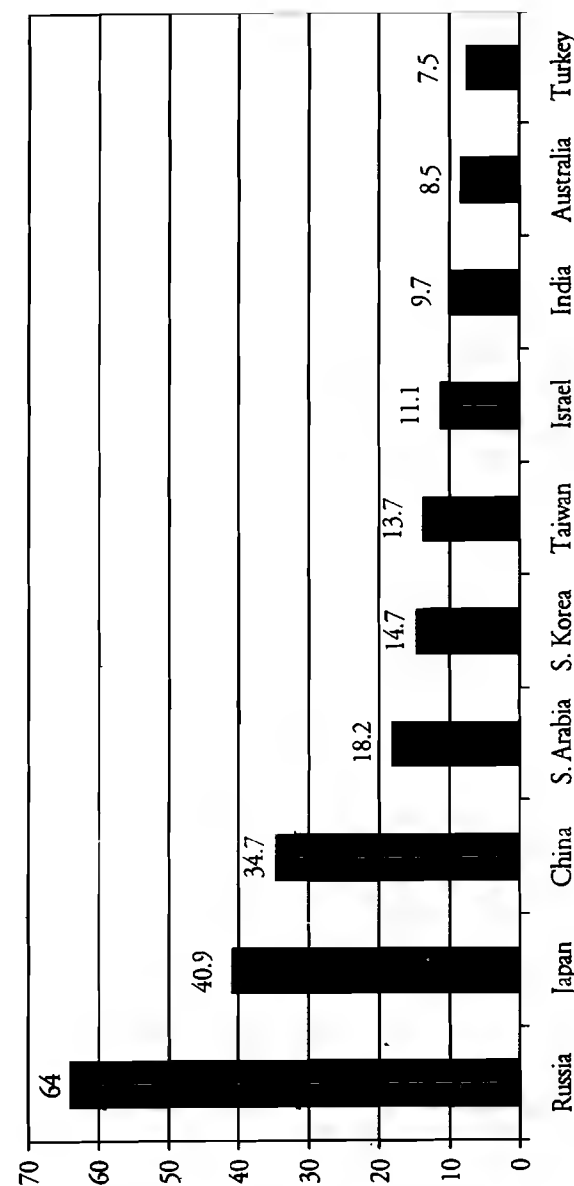
Defence Expenditure in Asian and Neighbouring Countries

9.13 In 1997, India ranked eighth among the top defence spenders in Asia after Russia, Japan, China, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Taiwan and Israel. Figure 4 shows defence spending in billion US Dollars, in respect of the top ten defence spenders:

9.14 Due to lack of information, a precise estimation of China's defence expenditure is beset with problems. It is generally believed by well-known assessing agencies and experts that China's official defence expenditure reflects only a small proportion of its actual defence expenditure. Its official defence expenditure rose at an annual average of 15.83% during the five years between 1992 and 1998. According to an Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) Study, "Trends in Defence Expenditure", for the *Asian Strategic Review* 1998–99, China's real defence expenditure in 1998 was Yuan 334.32 billion (US\$ 39.8 billion) as against the officially stated figure of Yuan 92.86 billion. Pakistan also does not provide any details of its defence expenditure in its Budget papers and only gives the overall figures. It is, however, estimated that Pakistan's defence expenditure as a percentage of GDP varied from a high of 9.86% in 1965–66 to a low of 4.90% in 1998–99. As a percentage of Federal Government Expenditure, Pakistan's defence expenditure was nearly 24% in 1998–99. These figures do not fully reflect Pakistan's military capability. There are possibilities of Pakistan using narcotics generated money for defence purposes as mentioned in Chapter 3.

9.15 A useful yardstick for assessing comparative defence expenditure is to examine the percentage of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that a country spends on defence. Since 1988, the defence expenditure of Pakistan, China and India as a percentage of their respective GDPs has declined, from 6.63% to 4.40% for Pakistan, from 5.14% to 4.10%, for China and from 3.37% to 2.31% for India. India's defence spending as a share of GDP has remained consistently lower than that of either China or Pakistan (see Figure 5).

Figure 4



Source: IDSA Study.

Figure 5

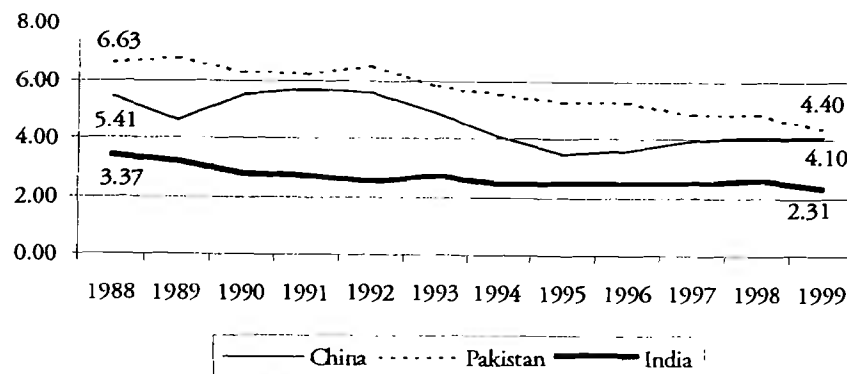


Table 6: Defence Expenditure of GDP

Country	Defence Expenditure/GDP 1997
Bangladesh	1.90%
China	3.90%
India	2.26%
Indonesia	2.24%
Japan	1.00%
Malaysia	3.74%
Myanmar	7.86%
Pakistan	4.86%
Sri Lanka	5.95%

Source: IDSA, *Asian Strategic Review*.

9.16 The comparative position of some other countries of Asia, particularly of those in India's neighbourhood, is tabulated in Table 6.

Major Trends in India's Defence Expenditure

9.17 An analysis of defence expenditure over the past four decades leads to the following broad conclusions:

- (i) Despite yearly increases in allocations, the rate of increase in defence outlays at current prices shows a significant decline during the past decade. Defence spending, which was increasing at an annual average rate of growth (AARG) of 14.55% during the 25 years following the 1962 Sino-Indian war, started growing at an annual average rate of 16.52% during the last ten years of this period (1978-1987). There was, however, a substantial drop in the annual average growth rate to 11.50% in the period 1988-97, over the preceding decade (1978-87). This constitutes a decline of 30%. During this period, the Rupee depreciated by over 70% as compared to the US Dollar.
- (ii) Defence expenditure grew at a reasonable rate, in terms of current prices; however, after the mid-1980s it has remained more or less stagnant at constant prices. Meanwhile, the annual average rate of growth of defence expenditure (AARG) decreased sharply by 67% from 7.35% during 1978-1987, to a modest 2.44% in 1988-1997.
- (iii) A major victim of the decline in defence expenditure has been defence modernisation and replacement of obsolete/obsolescent equipment and weapons systems. This process was particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in currency exchange ratios. It is estimated that capital expenditure during the 25 year period beginning 1963, grew at an AARG of 16.17%. During the last ten years of this same period (1978-1987), the growth rate had gone up to 20.92%. The AARG of capital expenditure for the decade following 1978-87, however, declined by nearly 43%, to a mere 11.96%. It would be pertinent to mention, however, that some part of revenue expenditure also covers capital items contributing replacement or modernisation. A significant part of defence PSU production and R&D expenditure, which also assists modernisation is reflected under the revenue head. With the rising cost of equipment and weapons systems, this reduction eroded the resources available both for modernisation and replacement. The proportion between revenue and capital expenditure has been changing over time owing to a

relatively slower growth rate for capital expenditure. Significant increases in capital expenditure rectified the situation to some extent during 1978–1987. After 1993, however, the gap between revenue and capital expenditure has been increasing and has adversely affected the pace of modernisation.

- (iv) While capital expenditure in terms of current prices shows stagnation, the annual growth rate in terms of constant prices (1980–81) has decreased sharply to a fifth of the figure for the 1980s. In order to assess the purchasing power of this expenditure, it is necessary to take into account the foreign exchange component and international inflationary factors.
- (v) The gap between projected requirements and resource availability for modernisation is large. Partly, the allocation of resources has depended on the progress in implementation of schemes. This in turn is possible only when specifications are firmed up, vendor selection is finalised, trials and negotiations are completed and approvals are obtained. The Reports of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence have pointed out that the Ministry of Finance has been allocating sums which are substantially lower than what the Ministry of Defence has been seeking. This gap has been 18.81% and 26.63% during the years 1996–97 and 1997–98, respectively. When compared with what the Defence Services have requested, the corresponding shortfall for the above years was about 40% and 23%, respectively. Table 7 provides the details.

The Nuclear Factor

9.18 In the past, some advocates of nuclear armaments, especially in the West, have argued that nuclearisation will enable the Defence Services to reduce expenditure significantly on conventional forces. This is unlikely to happen in the Indian context. It appears that India's own policy makers in the 1990s had brought down the defence outlays as a percentage of GDP even as India carried out nuclear weaponisation. The Pakistani Army Chief, General Musharraf in his speech on April 12, 1999 was presumably emphasising

Table 7: Modernisation and Re-equipment (Allocations in Crores of Rupees)

Year	Defence Services Projection (Rs.)	Min of Def Projection (Rs.)	Min of Fin Provision (Rs.)	Shortfall from Projection by Services (%)	Shortfall from MOD Projection (Rs.)	Shortfall from MOD Projection (%)
1995–96	11,549.40	N/A	6,945.43	39.86	N/A	N/A
1996–97	9,958.33	9,428.67	7,654.83	23.13	1,773.84	18.81
1997–98	12,666.75	10,024.90	7,355.27	41.93	2,669.63	26.63
1998–99	N/A	10,220.76	9,497.42	N/A	723.34	7.08
1999–2000	18,055.60	11,920.02	11,383.02	36.96	537.00	4.51

Source: IDSA Study.

the same argument when he asserted that in a situation of nuclear deterrence between India and Pakistan there were more chances of a low-intensity conflict as against a regular conventional war. The school of thought which expected a reduction in defence expenditure with nuclear weaponisation, had possibly not taken into account the implications of proxy wars. Another factor which now needs to be taken into account is the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). A prerequisite of RMA is modernisation of defence forces which is highly capital intensive in nature. These two factors did not figure in the debate on the nuclear option till the 1980s and the proxy war is an India specific consideration. It is also argued that a policy of "no first use" and a commitment to only retaliatory use of nuclear weapons will, in fact imply an enhanced level of conventional military capability. The goal must be to raise the nuclear threshold to as high a level as feasible. On account of compelling economic circumstances, India's defence outlays had to be reduced in the early 1990s; but no attempt was made to evolve a comprehensive security policy keeping in view the changing threat scenario because of the proxy war, nuclearisation in the sub-continent and RMA. The Committee feels that in the light of these factors and the need to optimise defence expenditure, a comprehensive security policy needs to be evolved. Defence plans can thereafter be developed within the overall framework of this policy.

Defence Research and Development

9.19 Although there has been a gradual increase in the share of R&D in the defence budget, its share of the country's GDP has been declining progressively from 0.16% in 1987-88 to 0.10% in 1996-97. This increased marginally to 0.14% of GDP in 1999-2000.

9.20 The Parliamentary Standing Committee on defence has recommended an increase in defence R&D to at least 10% of the defence budget. This target is not likely to be achieved in the short term due to constraint of resources.

Defence Expenditure and the Kargil War

9.21 Some questions have been raised about the impact of declining defence expenditure on the nation's capacity to counter effectively the Kargil intrusion and, in particular, the preparedness of the jawans for high altitude conflict. The evidence available to the Committee does not show that a paucity of resources was *per se* responsible for any lack of preparedness for the Kargil conflict. The prioritisation of threats among external intelligence agency and the Army did not provide for Kargil-type intrusions and consequently their policies in regard to appropriate efforts for space and aerial surveillance as well as reserves to be maintained were influenced by it. The harsh mountain terrain of the Kargil sector was considered virtually impregnable in winter. Nonetheless, when the intrusions were detected, the required clothing, equipment and other stores were provided from reserves; some shortage of special clothing was made up by extreme cold clothing and part worn special (glacial) clothing of troops which had returned from Siachen. However, there was some shortage of sleeping bags and boots. Most items needed for the Kargil War were affordable within the available outlays. Such operational voids as did indeed exist are attributable primarily to procurement procedures and cycle (which includes exploration of indigenous options before imports, finalisation of technical specifications, vendor identification, trials, etc.), prioritisation and the element of surprise in Kargil.

9.22 An issue which requires special mention here is the lot of India's infantrymen. The brunt of the Kargil War had to be borne by the foot soldiers. They had to climb high mountains under extreme cold in pitch darkness. They had to carry heavy loads of weapons, ammunition, rations and other requirements which made their task even more arduous. The Committee feels that there is need to give a high priority to properly equipping infantrymen with weapons, equipment and clothing, suitable for the threats they are required to face in the region. Attention needs to be given to reducing the weight of weapons and stores they have to carry.

9.23 Some analysts have pointed out that declining defence expenditure and its adverse impact on defence modernisation

reinforced the Pakistani perception of the Indian defence services being effete and ineffective. This hypothesis has to be viewed along with others, like Pakistan having been prompted in its Kargil misadventure by nuclearisation of the sub-continent; its belief that with nuclearisation it has neutralised India's conventional superiority; and that excessive preoccupation with counter-insurgency operations had debilitated the Indian Army. While these and other factors may have influenced decision-makers in Pakistan, available statistics clearly reveal that the inadequacy of resources has had an adverse impact on the modernisation of the Indian Armed Forces.

9.24 Defence experts in the country have made various suggestions about significantly enhancing India's defence outlays. Some have argued that the present percentage share of defence outlays to India's GDP should be enhanced to a given level. The Committee would not like to advocate any particular level of outlay as this is a task the Government has to perform in close consultation with MOD/Defence Services and economists. It is obvious, however, that over the past years, actual defence expenditure has been below the amount required by the defence forces to perform efficiently the tasks allotted to them. This has affected the process of modernisation and also created some unacceptable operational voids. Given the country's resource constraints the scope for enhancing defence outlays is somewhat limited without tightening up fiscal discipline elsewhere and ensuring a high growth rate of 6-7% for the economy. Hence, the defence Services must seek to extract the maximum value from each defence rupee. This will call for some drastic measures like restructuring of the defence forces, improving cost-effectiveness of manpower, retraining and redeployment, dispensing with avoidable and unnecessary expenditure, rigorous prioritisation, and focussing resources in areas likely to enhance the effectiveness of the defence forces in meeting the emerging challenges to the country's security. In other words a total reform of defence structure, its interface with civil government, defence production and procurement is called for.

Chapter 10

Nuclear Backdrop

Introduction

10.1 The nuclear capabilities of India and Pakistan, the perception of mutual deterrence between the two countries prior to the May 1998 tests, and the impact of those tests and their relevance to the Pakistani action in Kargil have been much debated in the country. During the Kargil conflict, both official Pakistani spokesmen and non-officials attempted to convey certain implied nuclear threats. There was also a perceived mutual deterrence that might have influenced the prolonged proxy war in Jammu & Kashmir and disabled India from using its assumed conventional military superiority over the past ten years. As late as on April 12, 1999, General Musharraf said in Karachi that while the probability of conventional war between India and Pakistan was virtually zero, proxy war was highly probable given the nuclear balance between them. In the light of these considerations, the Committee felt it necessary to investigate Pakistan's nuclear weapons development programme and its relationship with that country's policy towards India with particular reference to its objectives in Jammu & Kashmir. It was therefore logical to trace the origin and course of India's nuclear weapons programme as well.

Pakistan's Nuclear Capability

Mid-1960s to Early 1970s

10.2 Pakistan's interest in nuclear weapons goes back to the mid-1960s when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then a Minister in the Ayub Khan Government, negotiated the agreement to establish the PINSTECH

research reactor and sent hundreds of Pakistani scientists for training abroad. In 1969 Bhutto wrote in his book *The Myth of Independence*, that "...All wars of our age have become total wars...it would be dangerous to plan for less and our plans should, therefore, include the nuclear deterrent...India is unlikely to concede nuclear monopoly to others..."¹

10.3 The Pakistani nuclear weapons programme as such owes its origin to a meeting held on January 24, 1972 in Multan where President Z.A. Bhutto asked his scientists and engineers whether "they could do it" (build the bomb); they replied that they could, "given the resources and the facilities" which Bhutto promised he would get for them.² However, interest in weaponising the nuclear programme was evident within the Pakistan Government even in the mid-1960s. Z.A. Bhutto, then Foreign Minister in Ayub Khan's military regime, said in 1965 that "If India builds the bomb, we will eat grass or leaves, even go hungry, but we will get one of our own; we have no alternative".³

The Plutonium Route—Early 1970s

10.4 Bhutto's assumption of office as President and the decision he took at the 1972 Multan meeting gave the Pakistani nuclear weapons programme a concrete shape and direction. Bhutto's initial aim was presumably to divert spent fuel from the KANUPP reactor and reprocess it either at PINSTECH or at the new reprocessing plant he intended to build at Chashma with French assistance. Negotiations with France began in March 1973 but fell through by August 1978 when the French capitulated to US pressure not to build the plant.⁴ However, a large majority of blueprints had been transferred by that time and Pakistan is believed to have developed a functional laboratory scale reprocessing plant at New Laboratories, PINSTECH, based on the French blueprints. Pakistan also built a larger scale plant at Chashma based on this design, KNC-II. In 1973, Pakistan awarded the Belgian company, Belgonucleaire, a contract to build a heavy water plant near Multan.⁵

10.5 Bhutto wrote in his death cell that "...my single most important achievement which I believe will dominate the portrait of

my public life is an agreement which I arrived at after an assiduous and tenacious endeavour spanning over eleven years of negotiations. In the present context, the agreement of mine, concluded in June 1976 will perhaps be my greatest achievement and contribution to the survival of our people and our nation."⁶ Bhutto was in Beijing on June 1, 1976, accompanied by a high-level scientific and military delegation. It has been assessed that the agreement for the supply of Chinese nuclear weapons technology and a tested nuclear weapon design to Pakistan were also arrived at during this visit.

Political Developments

10.6 Bhutto asserted in his death cell testimony that "...We were on the threshold of full nuclear capability when I left the Government to come to this death cell. We know that Israel and South Africa have full nuclear capability. The Christian, Jewish and Hindu civilisations have this capability. The Communist powers also possess it. Only the Islamic civilisation was without it; but that position was about to change."⁷ From the context it is clear that he was referring to nuclear weapons capability.

10.7 In her book *Daughter of the East*, Benazir Bhutto revealed how Henry Kissinger during his August 1976 visit to Pakistan had threatened Bhutto. She says that her father returned from his meeting with Kissinger and told her that he (Kissinger) had asked him to reconsider the agreement with France (for a reprocessing plant) or risk being made a "horrible example".⁸ Maulana Kausar Niazi, who was a minister in Bhutto's cabinet wrote in his book '*Aur Line Kat Gaye*' that Kissinger threatened "to make him (Bhutto) an example".⁹ According to another account by General K.M. Arif, Kissinger threatened Bhutto that if voted to power, the Democrats would "make a horrible example of you".¹⁰

Technical Developments: Uranium Route—Entry of A.Q. Khan, Mid-1970s

10.8 In 1975 A.Q. Khan, a metallurgist working at FDO (Fysisch Dynamisch Oeborlaboratorium), Almelo, a sub-contractor to URENCO (a European consortium) returned to Pakistan with blue-

prints of a centrifuge enrichment plant diverted unauthorisedly from Almelo. He convinced the Pakistani authorities of the viability of the uranium enrichment route for obtaining bomb-grade fissile material and was given the go-ahead to set up a pilot cascade of centrifuges, which he did at Sihala. Subsequently the centrifuges were moved to Kahuta where a full scale enrichment plant was set up.¹¹

10.9 From 1976–77 onwards, A.Q. Khan began scouring the international market for loopholes in export controls and purchased components for the enrichment plant. The project was named 706¹² under the supervision of the Army and kept a closely guarded secret. Khan had with him a full list of equipment suppliers for the Almelo plant. The book by Maulana Kausar Niazi reveals Bhutto's enthusiasm for the uranium enrichment route which A.Q. Khan had proposed.¹³ Some experts have assessed that from this time on the reprocessing route was merely a cover for the setting up of an enrichment plant.

10.10 Early indications that Pakistan was up to something new came with the reports of Pakistan's purchase of inverters from Emerson Electric of UK in 1977. Inverters are used to provide continuous electric current to centrifuges which rotate at high speeds. Between 1977 and 1980, Pakistan purchased an entire gassification plant (used to convert uranium ore into hexafluoride gas for use in centrifuge cascades) from the Federal Republic of Germany.¹⁴ The existence of the enrichment programme at Kahuta became known to India by 1978. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Foreign Minister in Morarji Desai's Cabinet, during his visit to Washington in April 1979 said that US officials estimated that Pakistan could produce a nuclear explosion in two to three years but that he believed it could occur sooner.¹⁵ The first JIC assessment of Pakistan's weapon-oriented nuclear programme based on uranium enrichment was made in the beginning of 1979.

Political Developments

10.11 Once Bhutto was overthrown, Zia continued with the programme he had inherited and accelerated work on the uranium route which had been entrusted to the Army. By the time the French

reprocessing deal was cancelled in 1978, the establishment of the Kahuta enrichment plant was well under way. In 1979 the US applied the Symington Amendment (Section 670 of the Foreign Assistance Act) to cut off aid to Pakistan since it was bent on acquiring enrichment technology. However, soon after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Symington Amendment was waived in the US "national interest", apparently in exchange for an added commitment that Pakistan would not enrich the uranium beyond 5%. In its enthusiasm to assist the Afghan rebels against the Soviets, the US ignored the nuclear weapons programme which progressed unhindered under Zia throughout the 1980s. The US Secretary of State, Alexander Haig assured Pakistan in 1981 that the US would not interfere with Pakistan's nuclear programme.¹⁶ When President Reagan became US President in 1981, non-proliferation was extremely low on his agenda. Thus Pakistan continued to increase its enrichment level.

10.12 Early in 1980, Professor Stephen Cohen, a well-known US scholar on South Asian studies visited Pakistan and held discussions with Army and Defence Ministry officials. Based on these discussions Cohen wrote that nuclear capability according to many Pakistanis "would neutralise an assumed Indian nuclear force. Others point out, however, that it would provide the umbrella under which Pakistan could re-open the Kashmir issue; a Pakistani nuclear capability paralyses not only the Indian nuclear decision but also Indian conventional forces and a brash, bold, Pakistani strike to liberate Kashmir might go unchallenged if the Indian leadership was weak or indecisive."¹⁷

Technical Developments—Early to Mid-1980s

10.13 In the 1980s there were speculative reports of Pakistan having carried out a test at the Chinese Lop Nor test site. By 1982 Indian intelligence had estimated that Pakistan had enough bomb-grade enriched uranium for a core or two.¹⁸ K. Santhanam, who was then Deputy Director in R&AW, informed the Kargil Committee that it would be fair to assume that this assessment reached the highest levels.¹⁹ Further investigations by the Committee brought out the

fact that Indian intelligence had reported even earlier that weapons grade uranium would be available by July–November 1981 and that preparations had commenced for an underground test at the Rashkoh mountain range in Baluchistan.²⁰ Dr. Samar Mubarak-mund, who was responsible for the weaponisation of Pakistan's nuclear capability, recently said that "1983 was an important milestone in the history of Pakistan's nuclear programme, when the first atomic device was manufactured and tested".²¹ General Zia announced in February 1984 that Pakistan could enrich small amounts of LeU (Low Enriched Uranium).²² In June that year, US Senator Alan Cranston stated that Pakistan had completed 1,000 centrifuges at Kahuta.²³ Zia denied this, stating that "We have the capability but our financial resources do not permit us to make the bomb".²⁴ In August that year, it was reported in the media that China had passed the design used in its fourth weapon test conducted in 1966, to Pakistan.²⁵ (This was confirmed by Indian intelligence agencies in March 1988.)²⁶ A recently declassified US Government document confirmed that the US was aware of the transfer to Pakistan by China of the design of a nuclear explosive device as early as June 1983.²⁷

Political Developments—Mid-1980s

10.14 By the mid-1980s, Pakistan had acquired enough highly enriched uranium (HeU) to produce a few crude nuclear devices.²⁸ The US Administration, however, continued to waive the Symington Amendment in its "national interest". As the level of enrichment and quantity of fissile material available gradually increased, it became increasingly difficult for Pakistan to fudge the degree of enrichment. In 1984, Congressman Stephen Solarz and Senator John Glenn introduced an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act requiring that the US Administration certify to the nation that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear weapon, was not developing a nuclear weapon and was not acquiring the technology or materials that would help it to make nuclear weapons. This was defeated by a single vote, mostly due to the US Administration's lobbying efforts on behalf of Pakistan.

Easing of US Restrictions—The Pressler Amendment

10.15 By 1983–84, sections within the US Congress were becoming restive in the face of increasing evidence that Pakistan had produced enough HeU for a few nuclear weapons. In order to assuage the feelings of Congress and continue assistance to Pakistan, the Pressler Amendment was introduced in 1985. This called on the US to cut off aid to Pakistan if the latter acquired a nuclear explosive device. The Pressler Amendment thus implicitly acknowledged that Pakistan had already gone beyond the enrichment and acquisition of technology phases of the programme. It raised the threshold for US sanctions from acquisition of enrichment technology to actual possession of a device. The amendment in effect eased the restrictions which would have been imposed by the Symington-Glenn Amendments had they been applied to Pakistan. Under the provisions of the Pressler Amendment, the US President was required to certify to Congress annually that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear explosive device on the disingenuous plea that US assistance would significantly reduce the risk of Pakistan acquiring such a device.

10.16 Thus assistance to Pakistan continued through the latter half of the 1980s under the cover of the Pressler Amendment. This was done despite the assessment of CIA analyst Richard Barlow in 1987 that Pakistan had acquired nuclear capability.²⁹ Barlow's assessment was ignored. Despite evidence to the contrary, the US President certified every year till 1990 that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear explosive device.

Technical Developments—Late 1980s: Weaponisation in Progress

10.17 Technical evidence from the mid-1980s onwards began increasingly to suggest that Pakistan had crossed the stage of production of fissile material and was on to designing the weapon assembly. As noted earlier, the Chinese passed the design used in their fourth test to Pakistan in 1983. In February 1985, there were reports of krytron switches used in triggering devices being smuggled to Pakistan from Western sources (Nazir Ahmed Vaid case).³⁰ In August

1985, there were reports of Pakistan making attempts to purchase flash X-ray devices (used to picture the characteristics of high explosives during detonation) from Sweden.³¹ Eminent US journalist, Bob Woodward, quoting US intelligence sources said that Pakistan had enriched uranium to 93.5% and had detonated high explosives to test the triggering mechanism.³² In July 1987 Arshad Pervez was arrested by US customs agents in Philadelphia on charges that he tried to export beryllium and maraging steel to Pakistan. Beryllium is used as a neutron reflector in nuclear weapons.³³ Pervez was indicted by a US Federal Grand Jury for this act in December 1987.³⁴ Non-nuclear sub-system testing of nuclear weapon components was carried out near Sargodha in 1986. A.Q. Khan Research Laboratories and the Directorate of Technical Development (DTD) of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission were involved in the testing of components. Software for simulated implosion test analysis on computers was procured by Pakistan (the SIFER package). Tritium which is used in the trigger of a bomb is believed to have been sold by China to Pakistan in the late 1980s and Pakistan also procured a tritium from the Federal Republic of Germany in 1987. Pakistan was further noticed attempting to use sophisticated explosives such as HMX. All this evidence pointed towards its attempts to ruggedise and miniaturise its nuclear devices for delivery by aircraft or missiles.³⁵

10.18 Indian intelligence reports by March 1988 concluded that Pakistan was in possession of at least three nuclear devices* of 15–20 kiloton yield.³⁶

Political Developments—Mid to Late 1980s: Pakistani Admissions Regarding Possession of Nuclear Weapons

10.19 Pakistan's progress towards nuclear weaponisation coincided with an increasingly assertive political posture towards India from

* The estimates of the number of cores/devices/weapons in Pakistan's possession vary in different reports and assessments. The Committee is not in a position to evaluate these reports and assessments. There is, however, general agreement that Pakistan achieved its nuclear weapon capability in 1987.

the mid-1980s. In January 1987, A.Q. Khan gave an interview to Kuldip Nayyar, an Indian journalist, in which he claimed that "...they (the whole world) told us that Pakistan could never produce the bomb and they doubted my capabilities; but now they know we have done it".³⁷

10.20 Former Foreign Secretary S.K. Singh in his interaction with the Committee recalled that when Ambassador in Islamabad, he was summoned to the Foreign Office one midnight in January 1987. There the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Zain Noorani, just back from a meeting with President Zia said he had been authorised to convey a message: if India took any action not conducive to its sovereignty and territorial integrity, then Pakistan was "capable of inflicting unacceptable damage" on it. Pakistan's action would not be limited to northern India alone but also to facilities outside the north. When asked whether this implied an attack on Bombay, the Pakistani Minister replied that "it might be so".³⁸ This conversation took place at the time when both Pakistani and Indian forces faced each other across the Punjab border as Pakistan claimed it felt threatened by Exercise "BRASSTACKS".

10.21 In March the same year, General Zia told *Time* Magazine that "...you can use it (the atomic device) for military purposes also. We have never said we are incapable of this. We said we have neither the intention nor the desire... You can virtually write today that Pakistan can build a (nuclear) bomb whenever it wishes. What is difficult about a bomb? Once you have acquired the technology, which Pakistan has, you can do whatever you like".³⁹ In July 1988, General Zia told a delegation from the Carnegie Endowment that "...the present nuclear programme of India and Pakistan has a lot of ambiguities and therefore in the eyes of each other they have reached a particular level, and that level is good enough to create an impression of deterrence".⁴⁰ In October 1989, the Army Chief, General Mirza Aslam Beg, stated that "...both the nuclear option and the missiles (that Pakistan is developing) act as a deterrence; and these in turn contribute to the total fighting ability of the Army, which acts as a deterrent to the enemy".⁴¹

Technical Developments—Late 1980s to Early 1990s: Missile Capability

10.22 Having achieved bomb-making capability, Pakistan initiated efforts towards mating the weapon with a suitable delivery system in the late 1980s. It was in possession of Mirage III and V fighters and US F-16s. Since the latter were stripped of their nuclear delivery software, Pakistan sought to modify these aircraft for delivering a nuclear weapon.⁴² The Pakistanis were also reported to be working on barometric fusing techniques and a ballistic missile delivery option.

10.23 Pakistan's progress in missile delivery capability was manifest in 1988–89. General Mirza Aslam Beg, COAS, announced on February 5, 1989 that Pakistan had successfully developed the Hatf-I and Hatf-II SSMs based on French sounding rocket technology, with a range/payload of 90km/500 kg and 300km/500 kg respectively.⁴³ Notwithstanding these claims, and extensive Chinese assistance in modifying these, Hatf-I and II remained unguided rockets for want of a suitable on-board guidance package and the tests it conducted repeatedly failed. By 1991, the Chinese had begun directly transferring M-11 SRBM (300km/800kg) to Pakistan and 84 of these had been transferred by 1994. These are stored at the Central Ordnance Depot at Sargodha and have been assigned to the 155 Composite Rocket Regiment of Second Army Arty Div., Attock. Being mobile, they can be deployed in the field within a matter of days. There are also reports that some missiles may be located at Samungli (Quetta).⁴⁴

10.24 Pakistan may also have clandestinely secured some M-9 missiles from China. However, in view of the Chinese MTCR-related dialogue with the US and the threat this posed to missile deliveries to Pakistan, the Chinese did not supply them a large number of complete M-9 systems. In 1991 there was some doubt in Pakistan whether the M-9/11 deal would fructify. Pakistan therefore commenced negotiations with North Korea to purchase Scud missiles or their equivalent in 1991. A number of Pakistani delegations visited DPRK in 1991–93, including scientists from A.Q. Khan Research Laboratories (AQRL).⁴⁵ Eventually in 1997–98, North Korea

transferred about 12 liquid-fuelled Nodong missiles with a range of approximately 1,300 km to Pakistan. There is evidence to suggest that the Ghauri missile test-fired by Pakistan on April 6, 1998, was a North Korean Nodong.⁴⁶

Politico-Strategic Developments—Early 1990s: Linkage to Kashmir

10.25 The visit of the Pakistani Foreign Minister and the “tough message” he delivered in January 1990 has already been described in Chapter 3.⁴⁷ The crisis of the Spring of 1990 and the Gates mission have also been referred to in the same Chapter.

10.26 A report received from R&AW (Annexure 10.1) in August 1990 mentioned that highly placed [.....]* sources were of the view that Pakistan had produced several nuclear weapons and that it would attempt to hit one or two targets in India with nuclear weapons at the very commencement of any armed conflict.⁴⁸

10.27 This account suggests that Pakistan was intent on sending a deterrent message to India, with the warning that the Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) in Kashmir should not be escalated to a conventional war by India as it did in 1965.

10.28 An NBC report on December 1, 1992 stated that Pakistan had manufactured the cores of two nuclear weapons in the Spring of 1990 when tension over Kashmir heightened. In an interview to NBC-TV, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto admitted that nuclear weapons were assembled without her knowledge.⁴⁹ However, in a subsequent article in the *Defence Journal* (Pakistan) in December 1993 (Annexure 10.2), General Aslam Beg (then Army Chief) asserted that she was in the picture regarding nuclear decision-making.⁵⁰

10.29 General Beg, in an interview to the London-based Urdu daily *Awaz International*, disclosed on July 23, 1993 that Pakistan had “crossed the nuclear line in 1987 when it carried out its first nuclear test in cold laboratory conditions”.⁵¹

* Government Security Deletion.

10.30 Pakistan's diplomats began claiming nuclear capability in the early 1990s. In February 1992, Foreign Secretary, Shahryar Khan said in an interview in Washington that "the capability (nuclear) is there". He added that his country possessed "elements which if put together would become a device".⁵² He confirmed that these included "cores" fashioned from HeU. Soon after, Abida Hussain, Pakistan's Ambassador to the US, addressing George Washington University said that Pakistan "...borrowed and stole in the face of difficulty" to acquire nuclear weapons. "Nuclear weapons are a symbol of power and we are not willing to deny ourselves a symbol of power...I am proud to represent a Government which had decided to tell the truth..."⁵³

10.31 In July 1993, then President Ghulam Ishaq Khan stated that "as long as the Kashmir issue was not resolved, Pakistan could not afford to overlook the deterrent value of nuclear weapons". *The Muslim* quoted him saying that India had wanted to start a war with Pakistan at least thrice in the last nine years. At one stage Indira Gandhi had fixed a date to attack Pakistan but the only thing which held her back was the latter's nuclear capability. Just 10 days before the planned attack, she was assassinated and the plan was dropped.⁵⁴ The perception that nuclear weapons served to deter India on three occasions was repeated more recently in an article by former Pakistan Foreign Ministers, Aga Shahi and Abdul Sattar along with retired Air Chief Marshal Zulfikar Ali Khan. They wrote that the first occasion was in the mid-1980s when an air attack on Kahuta was being planned. The second was during Operation BRASSTACKS under which (according to the authors), India planned to cut off southern Pakistan. The third was in April–May 1990 when the US President dispatched Robert Gates as his special envoy to Pakistan and India on a mission of preventive diplomacy⁵⁵ (Annexure 10.3).

10.32 Moeen Qureshi, who was caretaker Prime Minister in 1993, takes the credit for establishing the so-called link between Kashmir and the nuclear issue. He said in November 1993 that his Government's policy on the nuclear issue was no different from the one followed by previous governments. "The only difference was that it had emphasised the close link between Kashmir and Pakistan's nuclear capability".⁵⁶

10.33 In April 1994, Aslam Beg stated that "Another advantage that Pakistan has in possessing a nuclear weapon is that India cannot indulge in nuclear blackmail against Pakistan since we have a meaningful capability".⁵⁷ On August 23, 1994 the former Pakistan Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, who was then in the opposition, stated at a rally in POK: "I confirm that Pakistan possesses an atom bomb".⁵⁸

Technical Developments—Mid-1990s Onwards

10.34 Given Pakistan's objective of acquiring missiles of a longer range than the M-11, China decided that rather than transfer these, it would set up a plant to manufacture the solid-fuelled M-series missiles in Pakistan itself. The programme commenced in March 1995 with the plant being set up at Fatehjung under the aegis of the National Development Complex (NDC) of the PAEC. Experts working on the project were drawn from PAEC, SUPARCO (Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission), DESTO (Defence Science and Technology Organisation) and the Air Weapon Complex of the Pakistan Air Force. The NDC was headed by Samar Mubarakmund, Member Technical of the PAEC.

10.35 Pakistan obtained all the key solid fuel ingredients—HTPB (Hydroxy terminated polybutadiene), aluminum powder, ammonium perchlorate, aziridine, etc.—from China and in January 1997 the solid fuel plants were commissioned. Equipment and materials were supplied by China Precision Machinery Import and Export Corporation and other Chinese companies through M/s Polyventure Corp. of Singapore. NDC is working on two missiles, the Shaheen-I (similar to the M-9) and a longer range missile, with a planned range of at least 2,500km. Static tests for Shaheen-I have been successfully conducted. Pakistani delegations visited China recently and attempted to contact scientists and entities engaged in missile development. The objective appeared to be to further their aim to manufacture a longer range solid-fuelled missile.⁵⁹ The Heritage Foundation in its annual *US and Asia: Statistical Handbook*, said recently that Pakistan is developing the Ghauri and Shaheen series of ballistic missiles with North Korean and Chinese assistance respectively.⁶⁰

10.36 Pakistan continued to work on uranium enrichment in the 1990s. Between 1994–96, AQKRL procured 5,000 ring magnets from China.⁶¹ These magnets, whose sale is governed by safeguards under International Atomic Energy Agency guidelines, are made of a samarium cobalt alloy and find use as the top-bearing in the suspension of ultra-centrifuge machines which Pakistan is using to produce HeU at Kahuta. In order to avoid imposing sanctions on China, the US continued to overlook such transfers. Procurement of maraging steel also continued through the 1990s.⁶² Pakistan bought vacuum valves and inverters for its centrifuges from Switzerland in 1993.⁶³ All these indicate that the enrichment programme was alive and well. The NPT provisions are being continually violated by its own sponsors.

Nuclear Tests

10.37 On May 28 and 30, 1998, Pakistan tested at least two nuclear devices. According to data recorded at the International Data Center (IDC), Arlington, and other international monitoring stations under the CTBTO (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation), the yield of the main Pakistani nuclear test on May 28 was 4.5–4.9 on the Richter scale and had an assessed yield of about six kt. The test conducted on May 30 reportedly had a low, one to six kt yield. According to some analysts, this test was of a better design and its aim was to test a warhead which could be fitted on a ballistic missile. The Gauribadnaur seismic array station of BARC recorded only one underground test explosion each on May 28 and May 30 respectively. The assessed yields from these signals were five to ten kt and two to four kt respectively.⁶⁴ Some of the cables and connectors required for the tests by Pakistan were supplied by China.⁶⁵

10.38 In the Indian Defence Minister's morning meeting on May 12, 1998, the issue was raised as to how Pakistan could hope to conduct nuclear tests in the next couple of weeks unless preparations for them were already well under way.⁶⁶ Benazir Bhutto claims that Pakistan had reports that India wanted to force the Pakistani hand in 1995–96 by conducting a nuclear test. After receiving such "disturbing reports" she claimed that "Pakistan had decided to open

the option of a test by making the necessary preparations to respond with a nuclear test of its own within 30 days unless the West showed a will to stop India in its nuclear tracks".⁶⁷

Continuation of the Plutonium Route (1990s)

10.39 The plutonium route, which was apparently abandoned in the 1970s for want of feed material for reprocessing, was revived in the late 1980s and early 1990s. With Chinese assistance, Pakistan completed construction of a plutonium production reactor at Khushab in 1998. A heavy water plant was also set up with Chinese assistance. An unsafeguarded reprocessing plant is scheduled to be built close to this reactor. The heavy water plant was completed recently and will take a few years to produce enough supplies to meet the requirements of Khushab.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, China has been supplying Pakistan with heavy water for the reactor again in violation of the NPT.

Politico-Strategic Developments—1990s: Kashmir and the Nuclear Issue

JIC Assessments

10.40 Assessments made by the JIC since 1991 have emphasised how Pakistan might use its nuclear capability to advance its objectives in Kashmir. Some of these are reproduced below.

- In August 1991, the JIC assessed that "Pakistan's nuclear capability would allow Pakistan to continue with its Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) in Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab under the cover of a nuclear threat, which in their perception would limit India's retaliatory options of threatening escalation to a conventional war."
- In March 1992, commenting on statements made by the Pakistani Foreign Secretary, Shahryar Khan and Begum Abida Hussain in Washington, the JIC stated that "the statements come at a time when tension (has) mounted on the LOC with JKLF volunteers led by Ammanullah Khan threatening to violate the LOC. The

admission of possession of cores and capability to make devices could thus be part of a deterrent message being conveyed to India."

- In July 1995 the JIC Monthly Intelligence Review (MIR) assessed that "Statements made by Pakistan Foreign Ministry officials attempt to use the nuclear issue to attract international attention to the Kashmir issue for their diplomatic ends."
- In October 1995 a JIC Paper assessed that "in Pakistan's perception nuclear capability would enable them to deter India from escalating the LIC in Kashmir to a full scale war; continue its support to insurgency knowing India would be constrained from retaliating; enable Pakistan to make up for its disadvantages in conventional military capabilities through nuclear deterrence; and attract the attention of Western nations to the Kashmir issue using the threat of nuclear escalation." The paper pointed out that: "Pakistan has sought to invoke its nuclear capability in times of crisis—1987 (Brasstacks) and the 1990 crisis—to activate international pressure and deter India from launching a military offensive. Its nuclear confidence seems to have added to Pakistan's determination to continue a war of attrition against India by supporting the insurgency in Kashmir. Recent pronouncements by Pakistani leaders that the nuclear issue is linked to the solution of the Kashmir dispute has added a new dimension to Pakistan's nuclear posture. It could mean that unless the dispute is resolved to Pakistan's satisfaction, Pakistan will retain its nuclear capabilities, thereby attempting to invoke Western/US intervention in the affairs of the sub-continent."
- The Pakistan section of the JIC's MIR of June 1998 assessed that "Pakistani expectations have been that with the heightened non-proliferation concerns in the aftermath of the tests conducted by India and Pakistan, the international community, particularly the P-5, would have a vested interest in involving itself with the resolution of the 'core issue' of J&K and adopt a much more interventionist role than in the past."
- In July 1998 the JIC's MIR assessed that Pakistani diplomatic and propaganda efforts continued to project Kashmir as the core issue between India and Pakistan and linked this issue to the

possibility of war in South Asia. The main objective of Pakistani leaders had been to secure the involvement of a "third party" in the resolution of the Kashmir issue.

- In July 1998 the JIC in its MIR also assessed that "Aware of the US desire to secure the entry into force of the CTBT and their fear of a nuclear exchange which would further damage the non-proliferation regime, Pakistani strategists projected that in the post-test environment, Kashmir has emerged as the 'root' cause of tension, at the 'heart of the deteriorating situation' and the 'core' issue. It is noteworthy that Pakistan has used its nuclear card to attract international attention to the Kashmir issue in the past as well (the May 1990 crisis being a prime example). In the post-test environment, their efforts to create a scare scenario met with a receptive audience. Pakistani firing on the LOC is thus aimed at projecting a volatile situation in South Asia. In view of the forthcoming UN General Assembly session in September (1998) and the interest being taken by the US in South Asia, tension on the LOC is likely to be kept up by Pakistan."
- The JIC, MIR of July 1998 also assessed that: "Signing of the CTBT has emerged as the main bargaining chip for both India and Pakistan in their ongoing dialogue with the United States on nuclear related matters. The Clinton Administration, which is facing opposition to ratification of the treaty from a Republican dominated Senate, is keen to secure ratification by India and Pakistan to facilitate its entry into force. Pakistan sought to establish a linkage between the CTBT/nuclear issue and Kashmir."

Indian Response

10.41 India's nuclear weapons programme does not owe its origin to the threat emanating from Pakistan but developments there naturally impacted on the direction and pace of the Indian programme. The Committee held discussions with a former President, three former Prime Ministers, Scientific Advisers (to the Defence Minister) and others closely involved with the nuclear programme. These clearly brought out the fact that the Indian nuclear programme was weapon-oriented at least since 1983. Moreover, all Indian

governments since Independence have supported the nuclear effort in varying degree. Even Jawaharlal Nehru, a champion of disarmament, realised the military significance of nuclear power. In a speech in 1946 in Bombay he hoped that "India will use the atomic force for constructive purposes. But if India is threatened, she will inevitably try to defend herself by all means at her disposal".⁶⁹

10.42 According to Bertrand Goldschmidt, Homi Bhabha suggested to Nehru in 1955 that India should publicly and unilaterally renounce the "Bomb" but Nehru responded that "they should discuss it again on the day when India was ready to produce one".⁷⁰

10.43 Nehru's vision of a technologically advanced India helped the country build the basic infrastructure to support a nuclear energy as well as a nuclear weapons programme. The predominant strand of opinion in the country in the 1950s and 1960s was against the weapons option. However, the 1962 Chinese aggression and China's nuclear test which followed soon thereafter had a profound impact on the psyche of Indian opinion makers and the political hierarchy. By 1963 itself it had become clear that China was rapidly moving towards detonating a nuclear device. In January 1964, Homi Bhabha said at a Pugwash conference in Udaipur that: "nuclear weapons coupled with an adequate delivery system can enable a State to acquire the capacity to destroy more or less totally the cities, industry and all important targets in another State. It is then largely irrelevant whether the State so attacked has greater destructive power at its command. With the help of nuclear weapons, therefore, a State can acquire what we may call a position of absolute deterrence even against another having many times greater destructive power under its control."⁷¹

10.44 Bhabha added that "A country with a huge population, such as China, must always present a threat to its smaller neighbours, a threat they can only meet either by collective security or by recourse to nuclear weapons to redress the imbalance in size." He went on to argue that if "any State is to be asked to renounce a possible dependence on nuclear weapons to redress the balance of power against a larger and more powerful state not having nuclear weapons, such as China, its security must be guaranteed by both the major nuclear powers."⁷²

10.45 On October 16, 1964 China entered the nuclear club by detonating a nuclear device. In the wake of the test, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri was believed to have requested the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, for an extended deterrence by Britain during his visit to that country in December 1964 but did not receive a favourable response. In 1965 he sanctioned a proposal put forward by Dr. Bhabha to investigate a "Subterranean Nuclear Explosion Project" (SNEP).⁷³

10.46 The Indian Government sought security guarantees from the major nuclear weapon powers. At a press conference in London on December 4, 1964, Shastri suggested that "it was for the nuclear powers to discuss some kind of guarantee which was needed not only by India but by all the non-nuclear countries".⁷⁴ Shastri acknowledged that he had floated the notion of security guarantees with British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, assuming that the latter would raise it with the US and the USSR. A declassified US State Department telegram (February 27, 1965) from Secretary of State Dean Rusk to Governor Harriman (then on a tour of Asia) indicated that Rusk had asked Harriman to sound out Indian officials on nuclear issues, adding that "although India had never officially raised security guarantees with the US, Shastri had discussed this question with Wilson and had publicly mentioned the need for protection from nuclear powers several times. The recurrent theme of his public statements has been that possession of nuclear power gives nuclear states responsibility to assure security of non-nuclear states from threats of nuclear aggression".⁷⁵

10.47 In October 1964, a US National Intelligence Estimate concluded that "India, given the facilities it now has, could produce and test a first nuclear device in one to three years after a decision to do so".⁷⁶ In the same month the US Joint Chiefs of Staff while supporting American policy of providing assurances for non-nuclear states against nuclear attack, strongly opposed any measures on behalf of India that could alienate Pakistan.⁷⁷

10.48 Replying to a question in the Lok Sabha in November 1964, Shastri said "our (nuclear) policy stands but who can guarantee what will happen in the future?"⁷⁸

10.49 May 4, 1965, the Indian delegate to the 114-member UN Disarmament Commission, B.N. Chakravarty enunciated five conditions that would have to be fulfilled for India to adhere to a non-proliferation treaty. One of these was that the UN must "safeguard the security of countries which may be threatened" by a nuclear weapon State or States near to possessing nuclear weapons.⁷⁹

10.50 In April 1967, L.K. Jha, Secretary to the Prime Minister, was on a tour of Moscow, Paris, Washington and London to explore the NPT draft which was under preparation at the time. In Washington, Jha was joined by Vikram Sarabhai (then Chairman AEC) and B.K. Nehru (then Indian Ambassador to the US). According to US AEC Chairman, Glenn Seaborg, both Sarabhai and Nehru proposed on April 14, 1967 that a "US-USSR guarantee against nuclear attack on non-nuclear countries was all that was needed—it could be a substitute for a non-proliferation treaty".⁸⁰

10.51 The US was reluctant to provide India with the kind of security guarantees it sought though some accounts suggest a debate in the US on the desirability of including India in some kind of deterrent arrangement vis-à-vis China. In the ultimate analysis, no viable security guarantees to India were forthcoming.

The 1971 War, the "Enterprise" Incident and Pokhran-I

10.52 The 1965 India-Pakistan war had no direct impact on the nuclear debate except to the extent of raising the possibility of Sino-Pakistan collusion. The 1971 war and the US tilt towards Pakistan together constitute a milestone in the nuclear decision-making process in India. The entry into the Bay of Bengal of the nuclear weapon armed aircraft-carrier USS Enterprise, at the head of a task force on December 21, 1971, with the stated purpose of "evacuation of Americans" was viewed by India as an attempt by the US to secure an end to the conflict on terms suitable to Pakistan by threatening nuclear blackmail.⁸¹

10.53 President Nixon in an interview to *Time* Magazine on July 4, 1985⁸² admitted that he had considered using nuclear weapons during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, if the Soviets had intervened. He stated that "there were three other instances when I

considered using nuclear weapons...Finally there was 1971, the Indo-Pak war. After Mrs. Gandhi completed the decimation of East Pakistan, she wanted to gobble up West Pakistan. At least that's the way I read it. The Chinese were climbing the wall. We were concerned that the Chinese might intervene to stop India. We didn't learn till later that they didn't have that kind of conventional capability. But if they did step in and the Soviets reacted, then what would we do. There is no question what we would have done." These developments would have been a deciding factor in India's security calculus that led to the peaceful nuclear explosion of 1974.

10.54 From 1975 to 1977 there was little movement on the nuclear front. The US Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act was enacted in 1977 which in effect suspended US nuclear cooperation with India. In April 1977, Prime Minister Morarji Desai declared that "I will give it to you in writing that we will not manufacture nuclear weapons. Even if the whole world arms itself with the bomb we will not do so". In his address to the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament (UNSSOD) in June 1978, Desai reaffirmed his pledge "not to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons even if the rest of the world did so", adding that India "abjured nuclear explosions even for peaceful purposes".⁸³

10.55 Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was Foreign Minister in April 1979, disclosed in Parliament that Pakistan's nuclear programme was not a peaceful one. Later that month he visited Washington and discussed Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapons capability. He told Indian reporters that US officials estimated that Pakistan could conduct a nuclear explosion in two to three years but that he believed that it could occur sooner.⁸⁴ Charan Singh, who was Prime Minister for a brief interlude in 1979, stated in his Independence Day address on August 15 that India did not want to use nuclear energy for military purposes, "but we might have to reconsider our earlier decision if Pakistan goes ahead with the atom bomb".⁸⁵

10.56 When Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980, she indicated that India would not hesitate to conduct nuclear tests in the national interest adding that "we should not be caught napping".⁸⁶ By 1982, it is believed the Indian intelligence agencies had informed the highest decision makers of Pakistan's ability to produce enough

enriched uranium for a core or two. Former President R. Venkataraman, who was Defence Minister in 1983, told the Committee that the test being planned at this juncture was related to NPT pressures.⁸⁷ He recently confirmed how he went down the shaft at Pokhran in 1983 as Defence Minister.⁸⁸ Dr. V.S. Arunachalam, in discussions with the Committee, indicated that Indira Gandhi had approved a nuclear test in 1983 after discussions with Dr. Ramanna and himself.⁸⁹ US satellites discovered the preparations and the test plan was abandoned under American pressure. The Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme was also launched in August 1983. This included plans for a 2,500 km range IRBM (Agni). Such a missile was obviously planned with a nuclear warhead in mind and would make no sense if armed with conventional explosive warheads. The Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi told a gathering of Indian Army Commanders on October 11, 1984 that "Pakistan's nuclear programme has brought about a qualitative change in our security environment".⁹⁰ After Rajiv Gandhi assumed office he cleared the continuation of the nuclear programme.⁹¹ The former Chief of Air Staff, S.K. Mehra told the Committee that he was inducted into the work on the weapons delivery aspects of the nuclear programme some time in 1986.⁹²

10.57 Inder Gujral recounted to the Committee how the nuclear weapons programme was continued under Rajiv Gandhi, though kept under wraps.⁹³ The Prithvi missile was flight-tested in 1988 and Agni the following year. In 1990, Pakistan once again resorted to nuclear blackmail as mentioned earlier. The Pakistani Foreign Minister Yakub Khan was told that Pakistan should not repeat its past mistakes, as the punishment by India would be much heavier.⁹⁴ Discussing the 1990 crisis, former Prime Minister V.P. Singh informed the Committee that Indian intelligence had intercepted some messages which indicated that Pakistan was very close to having a bomb but lacked a sophisticated delivery system. He said that this was not a surprise and requisite precautions were taken.⁹⁵ Dr. Raja Ramanna, Minister of State for Defence told the Rajya Sabha in May 1990, that India would never use its nuclear capability against any neighbour but if any neighbour were to do so, the country would rise to the occasion.⁹⁶

10.58 Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister, in discussions with the Committee indicated that the nuclear programme was well under way in 1989. Development had been completed and weaponisation took place between 1992 and 1994.⁹⁷ Former Prime Minister Narasimha Rao confirmed to the Committee that the nuclear programme was fully weaponised during 1992–94; else Pokhran-II could not have been conducted within a short period of less than two months (after the BJP Coalition Government assumed office); the process had started a long time ago.⁹⁸

10.59 By the mid-1990s, Pakistan's capability had matured and it had acquired a missile delivery system from China. The NPT was indefinitely extended and attempts were being made by some Western countries, led by the US, to cap India's capabilities through the CTBT and FMCT. At the same time, Sino-Pakistan nuclear cooperation was continuing unhindered and missiles continued to be transferred along with nuclear-related components. This, despite Chinese commitments to the US that they would curtail missile and nuclear-related exports. In response to these developments, Narasimha Rao attempted to carry out nuclear tests in 1995. However, the US got wind of this and the plan was again abandoned, allegedly under American pressure.⁹⁹

10.60 When Vajpayee became Prime Minister for a brief period in 1996, he planned to carry out a nuclear test. However, the BJP-led government did not survive and the plan was not pursued.

10.61 Finally, in 1998, in the wake of Pakistan's Ghauri missile test in April 1998, Prime Minister Vajpayee ordered the nuclear tests. Five devices were tested and conclusively proved India's capability across the yield spectrum from tactical to thermonuclear. India openly announced its capability and the Prime Minister enunciated the broad parameters of the country's nuclear doctrine of minimum deterrence and no first use in Parliament. Subsequently, the National Security Advisory Board prepared a more elaborate *Indian Nuclear Doctrine* for consideration by Government. This called for development of a credible, minimum deterrent.¹⁰⁰

10.62 On the basis of this account the Committee concludes that:

- The Pakistani nuclear programme was initiated in 1972 with a view to deterring India and neutralising its conventional military superiority. By 1980 its strategy was more explicitly directed at grabbing Kashmir at a time when the Indian Government was weak and vacillating and, in their view, liable to be paralysed by Pakistan's nuclear deterrent. Pakistan had probably achieved nuclear weapons capability by 1987. Influential Pakistani policy makers presumably believed that they had successfully deterred India on three occasions by 1990 and could now use their deterrent to prosecute their proxy war in Kashmir, having neutralised the Indian Army's conventional military superiority and by bogging it down in counter-insurgency.
- The Indian nuclear programme was weapon-oriented at least since 1983. All Prime Ministers since then had provided unreserved support to the development of nuclear weapons and a matching delivery system. While the motives of Indian Prime Ministers in sustaining the nuclear weapons programme are not on record, they were clearly aware of the Sino-Pakistan nuclear axis from the beginning of the 1980s. The Pokhran and Chagai tests of May 1998 made overt a well established covert deterrent equation without introducing any new element in the bilateral relationship since the commencement of Pakistan's proxy war in J&K.

International Scenario After the Nuclear Tests

10.63 By 1998 it was apparent that Pakistan's efforts to internationalise the Kashmir issue had been unsuccessful. With both countries going nuclear, Pakistan redoubled its efforts to project Kashmir as a potential nuclear flashpoint and sought urgent international mediation to resolve the issue. To that extent, Pakistan succeeded in bringing Kashmir into renewed international focus.

10.64 International reactions to Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests included condemnation, concern at proliferation, insistence that both countries unconditionally sign the NPT and CTBT, anxiety over a nuclearised South Asia, particularly in the context of tensions over Kashmir, and assertion of the need to exercise pressure

through economic sanctions. There was certainly a new international focus on Kashmir after May 1998.

10.65 The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1172 on June 6, 1998 which, inter alia, condemned the nuclear tests conducted by both India and Pakistan. There was specific reference to Kashmir in this resolution. The Security Council urged India and Pakistan to resume a dialogue on all outstanding issues, "particularly on all matters pertaining to peace and security". It pointed to Kashmir as one of the main reasons of Indo-Pakistan tensions and encouraged them "to find mutually acceptable solutions that address the root causes of tensions, including Kashmir". The Resolution also urged India and Pakistan to sign the NPT and CTBT "without conditions". It clearly reflected international concern at the prospect of a nuclear and conventional arms race in the region and expressed "grave concern" at the negative effect of the nuclear tests on peace and stability in South Asia and beyond.

10.66 The UNSC Resolution 1172 became a benchmark for some countries. The P-5 Foreign Ministers made reference to the nuclear and J&K issues on 24 September, 1998 and called upon India and Pakistan to undertake "serious discussions to address their bilateral disputes and to implement comprehensively and without delay all the provisions of Resolution No.1172". The P-5 Foreign Ministers expressed readiness to "assist India and Pakistan in a manner acceptable to both sides in promoting reconciliation, cooperation and a peaceful resolution of their differences, including Kashmir".

10.67 The OIC, as could be expected, expressed solidarity with Pakistan after the nuclear tests. It described the Pakistani tests as being in response to the Indian tests. Major OIC countries like Saudi Arabia expressed complete solidarity with Pakistan regarding the security situation in the region. The UAE described Pakistan's response as "fully justified in the face of a serious threat to its security". Kuwait blamed India for its confrontationalist course with Pakistan.

10.68 The Chinese reaction to the Indo-Pakistan nuclear tests and Kashmir is revealing. China has a close strategic relationship with Pakistan and its crucial contribution to the development of

Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme is well documented. Nonetheless it criticised the Indian nuclear tests and accused India of "hegemony" and of triggering a nuclear arms race in South Asia. It urged both India and Pakistan unconditionally to sign the NPT and CTBT. At the same time China is not in favour of internationalising the Kashmir issue. It urged both countries to respect and adhere to the LOC. Significantly, it chose not to support Pakistan over Kargil, being sensitive to the ramifications of an armed conflict in the region. Obviously China is worried should international mediation or other intervention in Kashmir establish a precedent in regard to Tibet.

10.69 After an initial knee-jerk reaction involving condemnation of the tests and the imposition of sanctions, many countries began to realise that India needed to be engaged in a meaningful dialogue. Several rounds of discussions were held between Indian and US officials on the nuclear and related issues. The French showed greater understanding of the Indian position. The Russians opposed economic sanctions even though they expressed concern over proliferation. Once it was realised that economic sanctions had failed to have the intended impact on India, the international community by and large began coming around to the view that having a dialogue with India on nuclear issues was a better option than attempting to isolate it. The progress of economic reforms in India and the attraction of a burgeoning middle class market with rising purchasing power was a factor in the toning down of Western rhetoric on the nuclear tests.

10.70 It is clear that Pakistan's expectation that concern over nuclearisation in South Asia would lead to international mediation on Kashmir was overly optimistic. The international community, though concerned about Kashmir, nevertheless wanted both countries to exercise restraint and resolve the issue peacefully through bilateral dialogue.

10.71 Having thus failed to secure international mediation on Kashmir, Pakistan seems to have resorted to adventurism. It committed aggression in Kargil by crudely violating the LOC, using its regular forces in civil dress along with some Mujahideen. It was able to re-focus international attention on Kashmir but, much to

its surprise, in a manner that was critical of its rash and unprovoked action in the wake of the Lahore Declaration. Once the battle was joined, the Indian military forces handled the situation effectively though with considerable restraint. International pressure mounted on Pakistan to withdraw its forces and respect the sanctity of the LOC. This underlines the message that the international community is averse to allowing nuclear blackmail to alter the long-established status quo.

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Chapter 11

The Public Dimension

11.1 It was perhaps always so in some measure but never as much as today: wars involve entire peoples, not just armies. The battle is everywhere and not only on a given "front". The communications revolution has annihilated time and space and, as we know, the Kargil action, from booming guns to the last rites of the fallen, entered the lives of millions of television viewers as a household experience. And out there in space one also witnessed what a continuing cyber war is on the Internet.

11.2 Even as the 15 Corps Commander headquartered at Srinagar mobilised and fought the action locally, within the resources of his own formations, the minds of people were mobilised nationally and globally. Such engagement takes on many forms through the process of communication of information. The civil-military interface represents an important dimension and must obviously be suitably addressed. More broadly, it is through the media that people at home and abroad can be kept fully abreast of developments and not be misled by rumour, propaganda and disinformation as they well may be if they do not have a truthful and speedy account of the facts and progress of events with the necessary background. This is essential for building national morale, winning popular support and understanding and in order to influence the shaping of international opinion and diplomatic reactions.

11.3 The media is or can be a valuable force multiplier. Even in circumstances of proxy war, the battle for hearts and minds is of paramount importance. It is little use winning the battle of bullets only to lose the war because of popular alienation.

Media Relations

11.4 How then did India fare with regard to information policy and media relations in Kargil? Perhaps fairly well in some respects, but not well enough. The full dimensions of the Kargil episode and its implications were not gauged or properly appreciated by the media for weeks after the first discovery of the intruders until the Indian Air Force was committed on May 26. Till then, Kargil was perceived as more of the same as before—infiltration. This was pretty well the political and military understanding too until maybe the previous week. The downing of an Indian helicopter and two MIGs by shoulder-fired Stinger missiles shattered this illusion. This was war.

11.5 The metropolitan papers and electronic channels sought to rush their mainline correspondents to the scene of action and the first frontline stories appeared early in June. Passes issued by the Defence Ministry in Delhi were not always honoured, or not too promptly, in Srinagar and beyond. Those who by-passed Zojila to fly to Leh and thence take a taxi to Batalik, Kargil and Dras did better. Facilities and briefing arrangements were limited and correspondents tell of picking up stray bits of information or reactions from junior officers and locals. Uniquely, the Srinagar-Leh National Highway 1A was the front. It was the main axis of lateral military movement and supply, the location of the Brigade and Division Headquarters, gun emplacements spewing fire at the enemy, the District headquarters and other townships, the bazar, the place to access the rare fax and phone facility, and Kargil's one and only Hotel Siachen. Everything happened on the Highway when it was not being bombarded, which it was intermittently, resulting in casualties, civil damage and evacuee movement.

11.6 In some ways, the "war" story wrote itself and it was no surprise that some less experienced reporters were taken in by gossip which was sometimes, but not always, edited out at the other end. There was no media cell to assist reporters. And few of the correspondents at the front had the benefit of training in war reporting.

11.7 There was some briefing for the J&K press in Srinagar and Jammu but the local press felt discriminated against and left out.

The local correspondents of the national press were also aggrieved by the fact that preference was given to facilitating coverage by their headquarter colleagues who might fly in from Delhi, be provided assistance to cover one sector or other of the Kargil heights, and then fly out. There was also dismay over TV channels with an international reach being given special facilities, obviously in order to ensure wider coverage which served a national purpose, a consideration that the local reporter understandably did not take to very kindly.

11.8 What this therefore suggests is the need for ensuring suitable facilities for all levels of coverage—local, national and international, the last both from India as well as abroad.

11.9 In Delhi, the routine briefing conducted by the Ministry of Defence was upgraded at the end of May and, instead, jointly taken by senior Army and Air Force spokesmen together with the Foreign Office spokesman on a daily basis. This certainly was an improvement. However, more regular and wider high-level background briefings to editors, senior reporters and military commentators should be planned in future for a war situation, and these briefings should be held, from time to time, even in the proxy war situation. Press kits with appropriate background—e.g., of the Kashmir dispute, the LOC, the terrain, maps, texts of the Lahore and Simla Agreements, etc.—should have been available for distribution and would have been widely cited and filed for future reference. A lot of reporters went into the story blind—a reflection as much on their own preparation and access to essential background as on the kind of back-up the official information services provided.

11.10 Some of the Kargil coverage in the aftermath of the Pakistan withdrawal was unfortunately affected by the pre-election politicisation of the issue. The former Commander 121 Brigade, who was in the eye of a media storm, informed the Committee that he was seriously embarrassed by some of what was attributed to him, including letters which he claims he never wrote.

11.11 The grievances of the Jammu and Srinagar media need to be viewed with sympathy. The local media is functioning under the constraint of threats of violence that have not abated. It should not be disregarded or discriminated against in terms of access and

facilities as it is the principal means of reaching the people of Jammu & Kashmir. The electronic media has perhaps an even more critical role in the State in view of difficulties of communication. AIR's Kargil transmitter was hit by a shell but recommissioned. The local Station Director felt it would be useful to provide it with a small underground studio as it could be in the line of fire whenever Kargil is bombarded from across the LOC.

11.12 The Union Government has decided to invest over Rs. 400 crore to expand and strengthen AIR and Doordarshan's facilities in the border areas of J&K so as to reach out to people in remote and isolated hamlets and to the population on the other side. While this is welcome, as some Pakistan radio stations like Skardu are clearly heard on the Indian side, the Committee was informed that Prasar Bharati in J&K lacks Balti and other linguistic skills to reach people across the LOC. Unless such software and programming aspects are taken care of, mere hardware expansion may not be cost effective.

11.13 Altogether, both sides of the information equation need to be strengthened in J&K and other areas of militant violence and insurgency. Transparency and improved information flows can help promote morale, understanding and reconciliation. Security and defence related public relations must be improved at all levels and the media provided suitable training facilities in order to enable it to do a better job of military coverage. Prompt and timely information is necessary when news is increasingly transmitted and used instantly, with news on the hour, every hour. Delay invariably means having to react to the opponent who is able to portray and interpret the news in the most favourable light from his point of view. This is what happened with the downing of the Pakistan maritime spy plane, the *Atlantique*, which had intruded into Indian air space in Kutch in August.

11.14 Credibility is as important as access and speed. The contrast in coverage of Operations BLUE STAR and BLACK THUNDER in Amritsar at the height of the Punjab crisis and the impact these made on the public mind is striking.

11.15 Although Kashmir looms so large as a national issue, public relations in this regard remain poor in the matter of a range of

details. The two Ministers who spoke for India on Kashmir in the BBC's programme, Hard Talk, were inadequately briefed for their grilling on human rights in and idea of mediation on Kashmir in the midst of the Kargil confrontation when international sympathy was by and large with India and Pakistan stood isolated. Satyameva Jayate is an excellent motto. But the truth must be assisted to prevail.

11.16 The ban on cable operators showing Pakistan TV and on VSNL providing access to the Karachi paper *Dawn's* website on the Internet appeared to be a knee-jerk reaction and not particularly well considered. Pakistan was able to portray these as acts of Indian censorship for fear of the "truth" whereas PTV's falsification of news from Kargil would have been the best antidote to its crude propaganda.

Civil-Military Relations

11.17 The Kargil War, like the proxy war before (and since), had a civil-military interface. The bombardment of NH-1A caused civil injury and a flight of the local population to safer havens. Farmers were unable to harvest the ripening crop and do their winter sowing in 1998. Livestock was killed or maimed. Houses and shops were damaged and merchandise or household effects destroyed. There were requirements of medicare, relocation, compensation and rehabilitation to be taken care of in the middle of the war.

11.18 Freshly inducted forces required land for their billets, offices, stores, truck parks, ammunition dumps and gun emplacements. Their very presence attracted shelling. They also required porters, mules, provisions and facilities like water supply. The villagers willingly supported the war effort but were later dismayed by delayed settlement of their problems and payment of compensation or for portage. Red tape came into play as paperwork had been postponed or dispensed with in view of the emergency but was procedurally mandatory to effect payments. There were questions as to under what heading porters should be paid from as war time procedures were inoperable since war had not been declared. These matters were sorted out, but not without delay which caused heart-burning.

11.19 The District Magistrate, an energetic young officer, felt sidelined in some of these matters though he was the ranking civil official. The local commanders were senior to him and so liaison became a problem. He cooperated fully to ensure the success of the war effort but felt somewhat frustrated by the turn of events. In the circumstances, it would appear desirable to establish civil-military liaison cells at the level of the Army Command, Corps, Division and even Brigade so that there is a healthy civil-military interface in emergency situations.

11.20 The uneasy relationship underlying the working of the Unified Command Headquarters is indicative of the need for better civil-military liaison at the top. Likewise, the civil and military authorities have not been able to work out a modus vivendi with regard to relocation of certain villages in sensitive areas along the LOC. In some cases hamlets are located beyond the Army's forward defence line which then creates problems of safety and security. On the other hand, where is the land and/or employment opportunities for relocated villagers? Such issues must not be allowed to fester, and require a better mechanism for civil-military liaison.

11.21 Callous handling of civil-military relationships can create avoidable rifts, misunderstanding, alienation and resentment. The Army's civic welfare programme has been a success and in many remote areas the civil population look on the military for succour. The military too needs civil support and cooperation for intelligence and services of various kinds. All the more important that appropriate structures are put in place to ensure a harmonious civil-military relationship at all levels.

11.22 None of all this should convey the impression that the media coverage of or civil-military relations in regard to Kargil went awry. The media coverage, especially over television, bound the country as never before. And once again, when the chips were down, the people of J&K stood fast against the enemy. The gallantry of the Ladakh Scouts and J&K Light Infantry is testimony to that.

Chapter 12

Could Kargil Have Been Avoided?

12.1 It may be asked why the unheld gaps were not held even partially as is now being done through the 1999–2000 winter. After all, the Pakistani intruders did traverse two or three ridgelines and variously penetrated five to nine kilometres and took positions on a number of commanding heights. They were specially clad and equipped and risked avalanche and cold-injury casualties in pursuance of an operation, even if extremely hazardous and unsustainable, that would have been a major political and military coup had they been able to pull it off. A quirk of weather upset the timing they had planned and prevented the degree of consolidation intended.

12.2 The answer is simple. Had the Indian Army sought to plug all conceivable loopholes to frustrate every eventuality, howsoever foolhardy, and attempted to safeguard “every inch of (unpopulated) territory”, it would have meant the Siachenisation of Kargil along a wider front with correspondingly higher annual human and material costs. This would have been neither militarily nor politically cost-effective and would have resulted in large forces requiring complex logistic support systems being dissipated in penny packets. Such a posture would have invited criticism and enabled Pakistan to bleed India.

12.3 There are larger unheld gaps along the northern border and it can be nobody’s case that the Indian Army should be strung along hundreds of kilometres of uninhabited wilderness in the High

Himalaya. That would be unproductive and ruinous. What then is the lesson for the future? The Kargil line is now being managed with several more winter cut-off posts to reduce the unheld frontage with more forward supply bases. Electronic surveillance has also been sought to be augmented under a programme already under way and will be reinforced by superior space and air surveillance capability with better resolution imagery in a few years’ time.

12.4 The number of winter cut-off posts can perhaps be suitably reduced once these surveillance systems are in place. But the real answer lies in moving away from a Maginot-Line, siege mentality of holding every “inch of territory”, irrespective of strategic value and even if totally uninhabited and without obvious natural resources. The alternative is to assert, as was done during the Kargil operations, that the sanctity of the LOC/border will be maintained and to back this up with a clear declaratory policy statement that any violation will be treated as aggression and punished at a time and place of India’s choosing. Further, that the initial enemy transgression and not the response will be regarded as escalation and provocation and that “even-handed” advice to both sides to observe restraint will be unacceptable. The aggressor and his victim cannot be placed at par, as has repeatedly been done by many Powers whose lofty responses have time and again been inspired by expediency rather than the principles of the UN Charter.

12.5 India cannot be accused of risking nuclear escalation by defending its territory. The onus of any such development can only rest with the aggressor. The world cannot allow nuclear blackmail to become the currency of military diplomacy through deception, prevarication and obfuscation. The extreme restraint India showed in repelling the Kargil invasion in the summer of 1999 was in the given circumstances politically wise and yielded dividends, though perhaps at a military price. But such magnanimity cannot be one-sided, else it could be read as pusillanimity. However, India’s diplomacy must be backed by an information policy that credibly communicates the country’s will and ability to punish wilful infractions by the other side. This can be done effectively without being provocative in any manner.

12.6 At the same time, there is an onus on India to reduce and eliminate such discontents and situations that provide Pakistan a political handle to stir the pot in J&K. Human rights violations are the consequence and not the cause of tensions in Kashmir—though this can become a vicious circle by causing avoidable alienation; but there has to be good governance, more rapid economic development and greater devolution to and within the State. A comprehensive policy towards Jammu & Kashmir within a larger security framework is long overdue. The last few decades have been marked by vacillation and drift, placing an increasing burden on the Armed Forces without requisite clarity in regard to the nation's political and strategic objectives in the State.

12.7 Pakistan for its part has become the fount of religious extremism and international terrorism and a patron of the global narcotics traffic. Decades of misgovernance and military rule have prevented the democratic tradition from taking firm root. In consequence, Pakistan poses a threat not only to India but to its other neighbours as well. Mercenaries and jihadis trained and equipped in that country have surfaced in various parts of North Africa, the Balkans and Central Asia, and Pakistan-based terrorists have carried out murderous assaults in the United States and East Africa. India should therefore call on the international community to nurse Pakistan back to democratic health and secure from it an abiding commitment to universally accepted values.

12.8 Even so, discussions with Pakistan on all outstanding issues, including J&K, should be pursued within the political and military parameters of India's declaratory policy and the accepted Simla-Lahore framework. How this should be done is for the Government to determine. Quiet diplomacy and back channel liaison have their place. But a twin political initiative, internal and international, is necessary as there is no military "solution" to the Kashmir question.

Chapter 13

Findings

I—Developments Leading to the Pakistani Aggression at Kargil

13.1 The Review Committee had before it overwhelming evidence that the Pakistani armed intrusion in the Kargil sector came as a complete and total surprise to the Indian Government, Army and intelligence agencies as well as to the J&K State Government and its agencies. The Committee did not come across any agency or individual who was able clearly to assess before the event the possibility of a large scale Pakistani military intrusion across the Kargil heights. What was conceived of was the limited possibility of infiltrations and enhanced artillery exchanges in this sector.

13.2 A number of former Army Chiefs of Staff and Director Generals of Military Operations were near unanimous in their opinion that a military intrusion on the scale attempted was totally unsustainable because of the lack of supportive infrastructure and was militarily irrational. In the 1948, 1965 and 1971 conflicts, the Indian Army was able to dominate the Pakistani forces on these heights. This area has been the scene of fierce artillery exchanges but minimal cross-LOC military activity. These factors, together with the nature of the terrain and extreme weather conditions in the area, had generated an understandable Indian military mindset about the nature and extent of the Pakistani threat in this sector.

13.3 The developments of 1998 as reported in various intelligence inputs, notably the increased shelling of Kargil, the reported increased presence of militants in the Force Commander Northern Area (FCNA) region and their training were assessed as indicative

of a likely high level of militant activity in Kargil in the summer of 1999 and the consequent possibility of increased infiltration in this area. The Pakistani reconnaissance mission in August 1997 in Gharkun village was noted and a patrol base established in Yaldor. An operation was also planned to apprehend the infiltrators if they returned in the summer of 1998. They apparently did not do so.

13.4 The nearest approximation to the events of May 1999 was a 15 Corps war game in 1993 which envisaged a Pakistani long range penetration group positioning itself south of NH-1A and bringing the Srinagar-Leh highway under fire from both sides. Even that assessment did not visualise an intrusion to hold ground by hundreds of Pakistan Army regulars.

13.5 Intrusions across the LOC are not uncommon. Pakistan had in the past intruded into the Indian side of the LOC and the Indian Army had responded adequately. There had, however, been no intrusions since 1990. An attempt to capture a post or two on the LOC was, however, anticipated as revealed in the press briefing of the acting GOC 15 Corps on January 11, 1999. Even this was not the kind of intrusion that actually took place in the Mashkoh, Dras, Kaksar and Batalik areas.

13.6 The terrain here is so inhospitable that the intruders could not have survived above 4,000 metres for long without comprehensive and sustained re-supply operations. They were even running short of water at these heights towards the end of the operations. Though heavily armed, the intruders did not have rations for more than two or three days in many forward 'sanghars'. Re-supply could have taken place only if there was no air threat and the supply lines could not be targeted by Indian artillery. In other words, it would appear that the Pakistani intruders operated on the assumption that the intrusions would be under counter attack for only a few days and thereafter some sort of ceasefire would enable them to stay on the heights and be re-supplied.

13.7 Such an assumption would be totally unsustainable in purely military terms. It would only be logical on the expectation, based upon political considerations, that Pakistan would be able to engineer international intervention to impose an early ceasefire that would allow its troops to stay in possession of the territory captured by

them. Such an assumption could not have been made without close consultation with the Pakistani political leadership at the highest level. General Musharraf has disclosed that the operations were discussed in November 1998 with the political leadership and there are indications of discussions on two subsequent occasions in early 1999. The tapes of conversations between General Musharraf and Lieutenant General Aziz, Chief of General Staff, also revealed their expectation of early international intervention, the likelihood of a ceasefire and the knowledge and support of the Foreign Office.

13.8 In retrospect, such an expectation was unreal. The Pakistani establishment has a long and consistent history of misreading India's will and world opinion. In 1947, it did not anticipate the swift Indian military intervention in Kashmir when it planned its raid with a mix of army personnel, ex-servicemen and tribals under the command of Major General Akbar Khan. In 1965, it took Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's advice that India would not cross the international border to deal with Pakistan's offensive in the Akhnur sector. In 1971, it developed high but totally unwarranted expectations about the likelihood of US-Chinese intervention on its behalf. The same pattern of behaviour was evident this time too. This is presumably the price the Pakistani leadership has paid for its inability to come to terms with the military realities. It has obviously been a victim of its own propaganda.

13.9 It is evident from Pakistani pronouncements and the writings of those with access to the highest decision-making levels, that at least from 1987 onwards, when Dr. A. Q. Khan conveyed a nuclear threat to India in a press interview to an Indian journalist, Pakistan was convinced that its nuclear weapons capability would deter India's superior conventional forces. Written accounts of foreign observers have highlighted that since 1980, the Pakistani military establishment had entertained ideas of deterring Indian nuclear and conventional capabilities with its nuclear weapons and of carrying out a brash, bold strike to liberate Kashmir which would go unchallenged if the Indian leadership was weak or indecisive.

13.10 Successive Indian Chiefs of Army Staff and Director Generals of Military Operations told the Committee that bringing to bear India's assumed conventional superiority was not a serious option

in the last ten years for a variety of reasons; commitments in Sri Lanka, subsequent deployments in Punjab, the North-East and Kashmir, and a drastic reduction in defence outlay. Pakistani writings over the years have highlighted the Indian Army's involvement in counter-insurgency in Kashmir and its perceived degradation as an effective fighting force.

13.11 Several Pakistani writers agree that the "Kargil plan" was formulated in the 1980s in the last years of General Zia-ul-Haq. There are different versions on whether it was sought to be operationalised during the tenures of Benazir Bhutto and General Jehangir Karamat, Chief of Army Staff. General Musharraf's disclosure that it was discussed with the political leadership in November 1998 soon after he assumed office has been referred to in paragraph 13.7. It is difficult to say whether the initiative for this move came from the Army or was politically driven. There was a heady combination of circumstances and personalities. Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister, had successfully removed from office the President, the Chief Justice and the then Army Chief, General Karamat, in whose place he appointed General Musharraf who superseded two others. General Musharraf himself served in Afghanistan and had ties with Osama Bin Laden and other extremists. He is a Mohajir and an ambitious, hard driving man. He had served in the Northern Areas for several years and had been associated with the crackdown on the Shias. He had commanded the Special Services Group (SSG) which launched an attack on Bilafond La in Siachen but was frustrated.

13.12 Some Pakistani columnists claim that Nawaz Sharif thought that if he succeeded in seizing a slice of Indian territory in Kashmir, he would be hailed as a "Liberator" and thereby enabled to gain absolute power through amendment of the Shariah law. There is no clear evidence on the basis of which to assess the nature and extent of Nawaz Sharif's involvement in the Kargil adventure. The balance of probability suggests that he was fully in the picture. This is borne out by the tapes referred to earlier and the repeated assertions of General Musharraf. Those who know Nawaz Sharif personally believe that he has a limited attention span and is impatient with detail. Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that Nawaz

Sharif was at least aware of the broad thrust of the Kargil plan when he so warmly welcomed the Indian Prime Minister in Lahore.

13.13 Influential sections of the Indian political class and media have been outraged at the duplicity of the Pakistani leadership. Some argue that Nawaz Sharif could not have been so duplicitous and therefore tend to absolve him and lay all blame on General Musharraf. However, having a declaratory policy different from that actually pursued is not unknown in international realpolitik and diplomacy. This existentialist divergence between the two necessitates diplomatic interaction, continuous political analysis, Track-II diplomacy and intelligence collection, collation and assessment.

13.14 The Committee has not come across any assessment at operational levels that would justify the conclusion that the Lahore summit had caused the Indian decision-makers to lower their guard. This has been confirmed by the discussions the Committee had with a number of concerned officials. Nonetheless, there was euphoria in some political quarters, among leaders in and out of office, though some others saw serious pitfalls in the Lahore process.

13.15 The Committee has attempted a partial reconstruction of Operation BADR based on diaries and notebooks recovered from Pakistani personnel during the operation as well as intercepts. It would appear that reconnaissance parties comprising officers started crossing the LOC in late January/early February 1999. They established a first line of administrative bases within a limited distance across the LOC in February. March saw heavy snowfall and so they could move further forward only in April. At that stage, more men joined them and perhaps the bulk of the intruders entered Indian territory in late April. This sequence of events appears logical as earlier induction of larger numbers would have added to logistic problems and increased the risk of detection. Care was exercised by the intruders to move only in the gaps between the Indian winter posts and to avoid detection by Winter Air Surveillance Operations (WASO). They were equipped for extreme cold and snow conditions. In the initial advance, they used Igloo snow tents and constructed "sanghars" of loose rock. Perhaps late in April, they moved up a further two to three kilometres. WASO helicopters and operational reconnaissance flights repeatedly flew over them as is evident from

one of the diaries captured in Mashkoh Valley. A combination of factors prevented their detection: camouflage clothing; helicopter vibrations which hampered observation; opportunity for concealment on hearing the sound of approaching helicopters; and peace time safety requirements of maintaining a certain height above the ground and a given distance from the LOC. Since the effort was largely to detect infiltration, most flights flew along valleys and not across the ridges. All these factors made the WASO patrols of negligible value as is also evident from the records of previous years.

13.16 After a lull in the winter from late December 1998, there was very heavy snowfall in March 1999 which compelled 121 Infantry Brigade to vacate one of its 25 winter posts in the South West Spur of Point 5299 in the Kaksar sector, popularly known as Bajrang post. Winter patrols sent out in early April 1999 were unable to carry out their task due to adverse snow conditions. The Pakistanis creeping forward also suffered avalanche casualties in the month of March 1999 as revealed by a diary captured in the Mashkoh Valley. All the Indian military commanders the Committee met emphasised the point that while it would have been possible for patrolling to be carried out even under these conditions, it would have required the troops to be specially equipped to withstand glacial conditions, as in Siachen, and a willingness to accept possible casualties. Until now, this had not been considered necessary or acceptable.

13.17 It would appear from the locations of "sanghars" [.....],* that the plan was to avoid initially confronting the Indian forces by moving stealthily along the unheld gaps. The Pakistani intruders were meant to disclose themselves in the later part of May 1999 and demonstrate that they were in possession of the Kargil heights along a "new LOC" before the normal opening of the Zojila Pass when regular patrolling by the Indian Army would commence. Presumably they felt that with the advantage of the commanding heights, their better acclimatisation and by now their more secure logistics, the situation would be distinctly in their favour. The Indians would need time to assemble their forces, acclimatise their troops and build up their logistics which would be

difficult before Zojila opened. They would also have to suffer unacceptable casualties in attacking the heights. This would ensure time enough for an internationally arranged ceasefire.

13.18 This was probably Pakistan's expectation. In fact, however, the intrusion was detected on May 3 1999, by "shepherds" who are occasionally retained by the Brigade Intelligence Team for forward information gathering. The patrols sent out in the next few days confirmed the presence of intruders on May 7. The Indian Army's response was very rapid and by May 9, two well acclimatised battalions returning from Siachen had been concentrated in the Batalik sector to contain the intrusion. In the next few days, three more battalions were moved from the Valley into the Kargil sector to counter known and possible intrusions in other sub-sectors. By May 24, two additional Brigades had moved into the area and the Indian Air Force was committed on May 26. By the end of May an additional divisional headquarters had been inducted to take over command of a portion of the Kargil sector from 3 Infantry Division. This rapid and strong Indian reaction was obviously not expected by the Pakistanis. It was now their turn to be totally surprised [.....].* Simultaneously, Pakistan tried to lobby with the international community for a ceasefire, which would leave it with some Indian territory and thereby justify its misadventure. Initially, there was support for a ceasefire but once Tololing fell and the Indian Government and Army exhibited their determination to clear the entire intrusion, the international community called on Pakistan to withdraw from and respect the sanctity of the LOC.

13.19 The sitrep issued by 15 Corps on May 11, 1999 was explicit on eight identified intrusions in the Batalik sector involving 160 to 240 intruders. The Northern Command had already made a request for the use of helicopter gunships on May 8. The Northern Command issued orders on May 12 that the whole J&K theatre be put on alert and additional troops be inducted into the Kargil sector. There are obvious discrepancies between the documented responses of 15 Corps and the Northern Command and the information regarding the nature and extent of intrusions at that stage, then available

* Government Security Deletion.

* Government Security Deletion.

in the Ministries of Defence and Home in Delhi as is evident from the statements of concerned officials.

13.20 Movement of forces within a corps is entirely within the competence of the corps commander and does not require clearance from any other authority. For the 15 Corps, an operation on a single brigade front was a 'localised' action. The record establishes that the 15 Corps Commander carried out his deployment with commendable expedition and competence providing adequate margins for all possible contingencies.

13.21 The Committee found that though the Corps Commander had moved adequate forces to contain the intrusion in the Batalik sector and followed it up with a similar deployment of forces in the Kaksar, Dras and Mashkoh valley sectors, there was still no clarity in the assessment of the magnitude of the intrusions and the composition of the intruders. This is evident from the statement of the Corps Commander on May 19, [.....].* Pakistan insists on projecting most of the intruders as Mujahideen, with NLI troops in a supporting role. The assessment of the nature and composition of the intruders was hampered by a number of factors. Pakistan deliberately violated the normal rules of war by sending in servicemen as Mujahideen and obfuscating their service identities. Secondly, as pointed out elsewhere, there was inadequate coordination at the ground level among Army intelligence and other agencies. This was lacking even at the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) because of the low level of representation by the DGMI at the assessment process and the DGMI representative not coming fully briefed on the latest situation. It is also apparent that the assessment was conditioned by the two-decade old mind-set that Kargil was unsuitable for cross-LOC military action.

13.22 There are reports in the media, some of which are said to have originated from young officers, JCOs and other ranks, that in the initial stages, the Indian Army suffered avoidable casualties, taken as it was by surprise. However, the progressive data of Indian casualties from May to July 1999 obtained by the Committee does

not entirely support this hypothesis (Appendix C). The Committee did not go into the matter further as its terms of reference do not require it to do so.

13.23 There were also comments in the media that Army jawans were inadequately equipped for the extreme cold and hazardous conditions when ordered to assault the Kargil heights. Their weapons and equipment compared unfavourably with those of the Pakistani intruders. The Army had prescribed extra-cold clothing meant for heights between 9,000–13,000 feet in this sector for use in normal times, and special (glacial) clothing for heights above that. Special clothing is issued for use in the Siachen area and certain limited reserves were held in stock. When hostilities commenced, this reserve clothing was issued to the men. Troops returning from Siachen duty discard their special clothing which is then usually disposed of by auction. However, in the previous year, the Corps Commander had ordered that part-worn serviceable (PWS) Siachen clothing be preserved. This PWS stock was also issued to the troops during the Kargil action. Despite this, there was still an overall shortage. This warrants a review of standards of provisioning for reserves as well as a policy of holding special clothing for a certain proportion of other troops in the Kargil and other high altitude sectors.

13.24 Though the new light rifle (5.56 mm Insa) has been inducted into service, most troops are yet to be equipped with light rifles. Adequate attention has not been paid to lightening the load on infantry soldiers deployed at high altitudes. In broader terms, increasing the firepower and combat efficiency of infantrymen has also suffered as has the modernisation process as a whole. This needs to be speedily rectified.

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13.26 The Air Chief further maintained that if air power was to be used, the country should be prepared for a Pakistani response. Therefore, the relevant Air Commands and units were activated. The CCS finally authorised the use of air power on May 25.

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13.28 [.....]
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13.29 In order to ensure that Pakistan would be deterred from any adventurous escalation, the Indian Armed Forces progressively moved to deploy in a deterrent posture. These measures sent out a clear message to Pakistan and the rest of the world that India was determined to oust the invader by military means. The Western and Eastern fleets of the Indian Navy were concentrated in the North Arabian Sea. From intercepted signals, it would appear that these steps had a healthy restraining effect on the Pakistani Armed Forces. This was impliedly admitted by Nawaz Sharif in his address to the nation on July 12, 1999.

13.30 The Kargil action saw the deployment of a limited number of troops and aircraft on a restricted front in response to a shallow Pakistani penetration across the LOC of no more than eight to nine kilometres at most. Nevertheless, given the terrain and political implications were a "new LOC" to be created, and in the background of nuclear capability on both sides, this was not a minor skirmish but a short, sharp war in which the Indian Army and Air Force suffered 474 killed and 1,109 wounded (as of July 26, 1999). To regard it as anything less would be mistaken. The consequences of its failure for Pakistan are there for all to see.

* Government Security Deletion.

II—Intelligence

13.31 It is not widely appreciated in India that the primary responsibility for collecting external intelligence, including that relating to a potential adversary's military deployment, is vested in R&AW. The DGMI's capability for intelligence collection is limited. It is essentially restricted to the collection of tactical military intelligence and some amount of signal intelligence and its main role is to make strategic and tactical military assessments and disseminate them within the Army. Many countries have established separate Defence Intelligence Agencies and generously provided them with resources and equipment to play a substantive role in intelligence collection. For historical reasons, the Indian Armed Forces are not so mandated. Therefore, it is primarily R&AW which must provide intelligence about a likely attack, whether across a broad or narrow front. Unfortunately the R&AW facility in the Kargil area did not receive adequate attention in terms of staff or technological capability. The station was under Srinagar but reported to Leh which was not focused on Kargil but elsewhere. Hence intelligence collection, coordination and follow up were weak.

13.32 The Intelligence Bureau (IB) is meant to collect intelligence within the country and is the premier agency for counter-intelligence. This agency got certain inputs on activities in the FCNA region which were considered important enough by the Director, IB to be communicated over his signature on June 2, 1998 to the Prime Minister, Home Minister, Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary and Director General Military Operations. This communication was not addressed to the three officials most concerned with this information, namely, Secretary (R&AW), who is responsible for external intelligence and had the resources to follow up the leads in the IB report; Chairman JIC, who would have taken such information into account in JIC assessments; and Director General Military Intelligence. Director, IB stated that he expected the information to filter down to these officials through the official hierarchy. This did not happen in respect of Secretary (R&AW) who at that time was also holding additional charge as Chairman, JIC. The Committee

feels that a communication of this nature should have been directly addressed to all the officials concerned.

13.33 Such lapses, committed at one time or the other by all agencies, came to the notice of the Committee. These illustrate a number of deficiencies in the system. There is need for greater appreciation of the role of intelligence and who needs it most and also more understanding with regard to who must pursue any given lead. It further highlights the need for closer coordination among the intelligence agencies.

13.34 There were many bits and pieces of information about activities within the FCNA region. Very few of these could be considered actionable intelligence. Most of them tended to indicate that Kargil was becoming a growing focus of Pakistani attention which had been clearly demonstrated by the marked increase in cross-LOC shelling in 1998. The reports on ammunition dumping, induction of additional guns and the construction of bunkers and helipads all fitted into an assessment of likely large scale militant infiltration and yet more intensive shelling in the summer of 1999. The enhanced threat perception of Commander 121 Infantry Brigade, Brigadier Surinder Singh also related to increased infiltration. R&AW assessed the possibility of "a limited swift offensive threat with possible support of alliance partners" in its half-yearly assessment ending September 1998 but no indicators substantiating this assessment were provided. Moreover, in its next six-monthly report ending March 1999, this assessment was dropped. In fact, its March 1999 report emphasised the financial constraints that would inhibit Pakistan from launching on any such adventure.

13.35 No specific indicators of a likely major attack in the Kargil sector such as significant improvements in logistics and communications or a substantial force build-up or forward deployment of forces were reported by any of the agencies. Information on training of additional militants with a view to infiltrating them across the LOC was not sector-specific. There was an increase in shelling in 1998 both in the Neelam Valley (in POK) and Kargil (India). The Indian side resorted to heavy firing since it was necessary to suppress Pakistani fire aimed at disrupting the traffic on NH-1A from Srinagar to Leh. While the intelligence agencies focussed on ammunition

dumping on the other side, they appeared to lack adequate knowledge about the heavy damage inflicted by Indian Artillery which would have required the Pakistani army to undertake considerable repairs and re-stocking. That would partly explain the larger vehicular movements reported on the other side. The Indian Army did not share information about the intensity and effect of its past firing with others. In the absence of this information, R&AW could not correctly assess the significance of enemy activity in terms of ammunition storage or construction of underground bunkers. This provides another illustration of lack of inter-agency co-ordination as well as lack of co-ordination between the Army and the agencies.

13.36 The critical failure in intelligence was related to the absence of any information on the induction and de-induction of battalions and the lack of accurate data on the identity of battalions in the area opposite Kargil during 1998. Prisoners of War have disclosed the presence of 5, 6 and 13 NLI Battalions and 24 SIND in the FCNA region from October 1998 onwards. The Indian Army has also assessed that elements of 5, 6, and 13 NLI were amongst the units that were initially used by Pakistan to launch the intrusions in April/May 1999. These units did not figure in the Order of Battle (ORBAT) supplied by R&AW to the DGMI dated April 1998. Since then, and until Indian troops came into contact with these battalions in May-June 1999, there was no information of their presence in the area. R&AW issued another ORBAT on June 1, 1999 which also did not show any changes in the area opposite Kargil between April 1998 and May 1999. An analysis carried out by the Committee on the basis of information now available shows that there were in fact a number of changes in the ORBAT of Pakistani forces in the FCNA region during 1998/early 1999. These changes included the turnover of some units, induction of two additional battalions over and above the 13 already in the sector as reported by R&AW in April 1998 and the forward deployment of two battalions from Gilgit to Gultari and from Skardu to Hamzigund (near Olthingthang) respectively. In other words, if no de-inductions took place, for which the Committee lacks evidence, there was a net increase of two battalions in the FCNA region over and above R&AW's projections as well as a forward deployment of two

battalions within the sector during the period April 1998 to February 1999. The responsibility for obtaining information on them was primarily that of R&AW and, to a much lesser extent, that of the DGMI and the Division or Brigade using their Intelligence and Field Surveillance Unit (IFSU) and Brigade Intelligence Team (BIT) capabilities.

13.37 It could be argued that given the nature of the terrain, the climatic conditions and the unheld gaps in existence since 1972, there was no way of anticipating the intrusion during the winter provided Pakistan accepted the risk of incurring casualties in avalanches, which it did. However, since Pakistan was focussing upon Kargil, information regarding the induction of two additional battalions in the FCNA region and the forward deployment of two battalions could have proved to be an indicator of the likely nature of Pakistani activity in this sector. In that event, perhaps greater risks in patrolling in snow conditions might have been found acceptable. More focussed intelligence about the activities of Pakistan in the FCNA region would have followed. In the Committee's view, a significant gap in information prior to the detection of the Kargil intrusion was the inability of R&AW to accurately monitor and report changes in the Pakistani ORBAT in the FCNA region during 1998 and early 1999 and to a lesser extent that of the DGMI, the BITs and IFSUs to notice the additional forward deployment of troops in the vicinity of the LOC.

13.38 The Kargil intrusion was essentially a limited Pakistani military exercise designed to internationalise the Kashmir issue which was tending to recede from the radar screen of the international community. It was, therefore, mainly a move for political and diplomatic gain. The armed forces play their war games essentially within military parameters. Unlike other countries, India has no tradition of undertaking politico-military games with the participation of those having political and diplomatic expertise. If such games had been practiced, then the possibility of limited military intrusions to internationalise the Kashmir issue might have been visualised.

13.39 One of the most realistic assessments of Kashmir developments as they unfolded during Pakistan's proxy war was "Operation TOPAC", a war game written by a team of retired Indian Army

officers in 1989. It is interesting to note that "Operation TOPAC" has since been mistakenly attributed even by high placed Indian officials and agencies to General Zia-ul-Haq. This shows how close the authors of "Operation TOPAC" were able to get into the mind of the Pakistani establishment in relation to their aims in J&K.

13.40 As mentioned earlier, WASO did not provide intelligence inputs of significant value. Those of the Aviation Research Centre (ARC) of R&AW were no doubt extremely valuable. The Army makes six-monthly indents and, wherever necessary, special indents on the ARC. These indents and their prioritisation depend on the nature of the threat perception which, in turn, is shaped by inputs from R&AW. This circular process entails the Army having to depend upon inputs from R&AW for its own threat assessment. In other words, the Indian threat assessment is largely a single-track process dominated by R&AW. In most advanced countries, the Armed Forces have a Defence Intelligence Agency with a significant intelligence collection capability. This ensures that there are two streams of intelligence which enables governments to check one against the other.

13.41 The Indian intelligence structure is flawed since there is little back-up or redundancy to rectify failures and shortcomings in intelligence collection and reporting that goes to build up the external threat perception by the one agency, namely, R&AW which has a virtual monopoly in this regard. It is neither healthy nor prudent to endow that one agency alone with multifarious capabilities for human, communication, imagery and electronic intelligence. Had R&AW and the DGMI spotted the additional battalions in the FCNA region that were missing from the ORBAT, there might have been requests for ARC flights in winter and these might have been undertaken, weather permitting. As it happened, the last flight was in October 1998, long before the intrusion, and the next in May 1999, after the intrusions had commenced. The intruders had by then come out into the open.

13.42 The present structure and processes in intelligence gathering and reporting lead to an overload of background and unconfirmed information and inadequately assessed intelligence which

requires to be further pursued. There is no institutionalised process whereby R&AW, IB, BSF and Army intelligence officials interact periodically at levels below the JIC. This lacuna is perhaps responsible for R&AW reporting the presence of one additional unit in Gultari in September 1998 but not following it up with ARC flights on its own initiative. Nor did the Army press R&AW specifically for more information on this report. The Army never shared its intelligence with the other agencies or with the JIC. There was no system of Army authorities at different levels from the DGMI downwards providing feedback to the agencies.

13.43 There is a general lack of awareness of the critical importance of and the need for assessed intelligence at all levels. JIC reports do not receive the attention they deserve at the political and higher bureaucratic levels. The assessment process has been downgraded in importance and consequently various agencies send very junior officials to JIC meetings. The DGMI did not send any regular inputs to the JIC for two years preceding the Kargil crisis. The JIC was not accorded the importance it deserved either by the intelligence agencies or the Government. The Chairmanship of JIC had become the preserve of an IPS officer who was generally a runner-up for the post of Secretary (R&AW) or DIB. The post was in fact left unfilled for 18 months until December 1998. During this period, Secretary (R&AW) doubled as Chairman, JIC.

13.44 There are no checks and balances in the Indian intelligence system to ensure that the consumer gets all the intelligence that is available and is his due. There is no system of regular, periodic and comprehensive intelligence briefings at the political level and to the Committee of Secretaries. In the absence of an overall, operational national security framework and objectives, each intelligence agency is diligent in preserving its own turf and departmental prerogatives. There is no evidence that the intelligence agencies have reviewed their role after India became a nuclear weapon state or in the context of the increasing problems posed by insurgencies and ethno-nationalist turbulences backed with sophisticated hi-tech equipment and external support. Nor has the Government felt the need to initiate any such move.

III—The Nuclear Factor

13.45 A lot has been written both at home and abroad about Pakistan being able to commit limited aggression in Kashmir because of the mutual nuclear deterrence deemed to have been established as a result of the Indian and Pakistan nuclear tests in May 1998. The Committee examined this proposition in detail. It studied the Indian perception of the Pakistani nuclear threat as well as the sequence of developments of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons programme. The Committee's findings are based on published literature, classified reports, statements by some of the main actors in the Indian nuclear weapons programme, former Intelligence Chiefs, former Foreign Secretaries and former Prime Ministers. These are summarised below.

13.46 President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto committed Pakistan to acquiring nuclear weapons at a meeting held in Multan on January 24, 1972 in the wake of the country's defeat in the Bangladesh war. As has been highlighted by a number of eminent Pakistani writers, the primary motivation for this effort was to deter India's conventional arms superiority. According to Pakistani perceptions, it was able to do so on three occasions. This was well before the Pokhran and Chagai tests in May 1998.

13.47 According to a statement made before the Committee, R&AW had assessed that by 1981–82, Pakistan had enough weapons grade enriched uranium to make one or two uranium weapon cores. Former President Venkataraman and the then Scientific Adviser, Dr. V.S. Arunachalam, both said that Indira Gandhi agreed to a nuclear weapons test in 1983 but called it off under US pressure.

13.48 A report published in 1984 indicated that Pakistan had obtained from the Chinese the design of its fourth nuclear weapon tested in 1966. It was therefore a proven design. By the early 1980s, Indian intelligence was aware of the China–Pakistan nuclear weapons deal. So also the US, as evident from a declassified document of 1983.

13.49 In 1987, Pakistan conveyed a nuclear threat to India at the time of Operation BRASSTACKS. This was officially communicated by Pakistan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Zain Noorani

to the Indian Ambassador in Islamabad, S.K. Singh. It was also communicated by the Pakistani nuclear scientist, Dr. A.Q. Khan to the Indian journalist Kuldip Nayyar.

13.50 In January 1990, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Sahibzada Yakub Khan, visited Delhi and spoke to the Indian Foreign Minister, I.K. Gujral and the Prime Minister V.P. Singh in terms which they regarded as verging on an ultimatum. Some time later, the Indian Air Force was placed on alert following the Pakistan Air Force being similarly ordered. The Indian Prime Minister inquired of the then Air Chief whether it was possible for the IAF to intercept hostile Pakistani aircraft carrying nuclear weapons. Air Chief Marshal Mehra replied that no such guarantee could be given and that the only logical answer for India was to acquire a nuclear deterrent of its own. American accounts describe Robert Gates' visit to Islamabad in May 1990, and his warning to President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and General Aslam Beg against any rash action against India. The Pakistanis describe this as one more instance when their nuclear deterrent prevented Indian aggression. During this crisis, the Kahuta establishment was evacuated, a fact that the Indian mission in Islamabad communicated to Delhi. On the 1990 events referred to above, there are varying perceptions among Indian officials. The majority view is that there was an implied threat.

13.51 In August 1990, information was received from a sensitive intelligence source that in any future confrontation, Pakistan might use nuclear weapons as a first resort. V.P. Singh and I.K. Gujral have a vivid recollection of this report. In October 1990, the US imposed sanctions on Pakistan under the Pressler Amendment, implicitly confirming to the world that Pakistan possessed nuclear explosive capability.

13.52 The Committee was informed by Air Chief Marshal Mehra, the former Air Chief, that flight trials for delivery of Indian nuclear weapons were conducted in 1990 and that efforts to adapt the delivery system to the weapon commenced even earlier. V.P. Singh said that he inherited the programme from Rajiv Gandhi and pursued it further. Gujral added that every Indian Prime Minister sustained the nuclear weapons programme. While all Indian

Prime Ministers treated this programme as strictly confidential, they reassured the public that the country's nuclear option was being kept open. On the other hand, Pakistan's Prime Ministers, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, and its Chief of Army Staff, General Aslam Beg, openly talked of Pakistan having acquired nuclear weapons.

13.53 It would not be unreasonable for Pakistan to have concluded by 1990 that it had achieved the nuclear deterrence it had set out to establish in 1980. Otherwise, it is inconceivable that it could sustain its proxy war against India, inflicting thousands of casualties, without being unduly concerned about India's "conventional superiority". Even as late as May 1998, when both sides conducted their nuclear tests, India had not used its conventional superiority during the preceding nine years of sustained proxy war by Pakistan in Kashmir. Successive Indian Army Chiefs and Director Generals of Military Operations told the Committee that the idea of using India's conventional superiority did not arise for various reasons other than the nuclear factor.

13.54 The 1998 Pokhran tests were the outcome of a policy of consensus on nuclear weapons development among Prime Ministers belonging to the Congress, Janata Dal, United Democratic Front and BJP. For reasons of security, none of these Prime Ministers took any one other than Chairmen of the Atomic Energy Commission (not all), and the Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister into confidence. The Chiefs of Staff, senior Cabinet Ministers and senior civil servants were kept out of the loop.

13.55 The nuclear posture adopted by successive Prime Ministers thus put the Indian Army at a disadvantage vis-à-vis its Pakistani counterpart. While the former was in the dark about India's nuclear capability, the latter as the custodian of Pakistani nuclear weaponry was fully aware of its own capability. Three former Indian Chiefs of Army Staff expressed unhappiness about this asymmetric situation.

13.56 Successive Indian Prime Ministers failed to take their own colleagues, the major political parties, the Chiefs of Staff and the Foreign Secretaries into confidence on the nature of Pakistan's nuclear threat and the China-Pakistan nuclear axis. The Prime Ministers,

even while supporting the weapons programme, kept the intelligence and nuclear weapons establishments in two watertight compartments. Foreign policy was being conducted without Foreign Ministers and Indian diplomats being apprised of the nature of the threat to the country or of India's own nuclear capability. It is quite likely that this secretiveness on the part of the Indian Prime Ministers and the country's inability to exercise its conventional superiority could have confirmed Pakistan in its belief that its nuclear deterrent had indeed been effective in Kashmir since 1990 and it could therefore pursue the proxy war and the Kargil adventure with impunity on the basis of its own prescribed rules of the game.

13.57 Pakistan fully understands that nuclear deterrence can work both to its advantage and detriment. In a speech on April 12, 1999, General Musharraf stated that though the possibility of large scale conventional war between India and Pakistan was virtually zero, proxy wars were not only possible but very likely. At the height of the Cold War, when mutual deterrence was in operation between the superpowers, it used to be argued by strategists that "salami slicing" of small pieces of territory which the adversary would not consider worth escalating to nuclear levels was always feasible. To counter the risk, the US developed a strategy of flexible response. What Pakistan attempted at Kargil was a typical case of salami slicing.

[.....].* Since India did not cross the LOC and reacted strictly within its own territory, the effort to conjure up escalation of a kind that could lead to nuclear war did not succeed. Despite its best efforts, Pakistan was unable to link its Kargil caper with a nuclear flashpoint, though some foreign observers believe it was a near thing. The international community does not favour alteration of the status quo through nuclear blackmail as this would not be in the interest of the five major nuclear powers. Pakistan obviously overlooked this factor.

13.58 The P-5 statement of June 4, 1998 and the Security Council Resolution 1172 of June 6, 1998 condemned the Indian and

Pakistani nuclear tests. It exhorted both countries to sign the CTBT and NPT and referred to Kashmir as a root cause of tension between them. This could have encouraged Pakistan to conclude that what its caretaker Prime Minister in 1993, Moeen Qureshi, claimed as the objective of linking Kashmir with the nuclear issue had been achieved and that Pakistan was in a position to implement a strategy outlined as far back as 1980, namely, to seize Kashmir in a bold, brash move when the Indian leadership appeared weak and indecisive.

13.59 President Clinton's statement in China assigning a role to that country in South Asia must have further encouraged Pakistan. The US also tilted in favour of Pakistan in imposing sanctions following the nuclear tests on the ground that its economy was weaker. At the same time, Pakistan would have realised that the impact of sanctions on India was only marginal and should the Jaswant Singh-Strobe Talbott talks make progress, the nuclear card might not be available for too long. With the passage of time, "crying nuclear wolf", even if linked to Kashmir, would progressively lose credibility.

13.60 Further, Pakistan's image was damaged by its association with the Taliban, Osama Bin Laden and increasing Islamisation. Within Kashmir, the Indian Security Forces were steadily gaining ascendancy over militancy. It is possible that Pakistan's political and military leadership concluded that the window of opportunity for internationalising the Kashmir issue by projecting it as a nuclear flashpoint was fast closing. Pakistan, therefore, needed to act in 1999. This conclusion is borne out by the veiled nuclear threats held out by Pakistan's political leaders and officials at the time of the Kargil crisis. Except for one irresponsible editorial in an Indian party paper, there were no analogous pronouncements in this country.

13.61 Some accounts claim that the Kargil intrusion was planned in 1997 and that preliminary reconnaissance and training of personnel commenced that year. If this is accepted, while Pakistan's reliance on its nuclear deterrence to prevent India from escalating would still be important, the actual nuclear tests conducted in May 1998 would not in themselves be all that significant as nuclear deterrence between the two was in place as far back as 1990.

* Government Security Deletion.

IV—CI Operations, Kargil and Integrated Manpower Policy

13.62 In going on alert to deter any Pakistani escalation and then focussing on eliminating the intrusion at Kargil, the Army had to withdraw [.....]* battalions deployed in J&K from their counter-insurgency role. This caused consternation in the State Government and some worry even to the para-military forces which were largely reliant on the Army in this regard. The heavy involvement of the Army in counter-insurgency operations cannot but affect its preparedness for its primary role, which is to defend the country against external aggression. This point has often been emphasised by Pakistani analysts. Such a situation has arisen because successive Governments have not developed a long term strategy to deal with insurgency. The Army's prolonged deployment in a counter-insurgency role adversely affects its training programme, leads to fatigue and the development of a mind-set that detracts from its primary role. However, the Ministry of Home Affairs, State Governments and para-military forces tend to assume that the Army will always be there to combat insurgency. This was vividly demonstrated when the Committee was referred to the Union Home Ministry's "Action Plan" for fighting militancy and the proxy war in J&K prepared in May 1998. This defined the role of the Army as being to ensure "zero infiltration" across the LOC.

13.63 The para-military and Central Police Forces are not trained, raised and equipped to deal with trans-border terrorism by well-trained mercenaries armed with sophisticated equipment who are continuously infiltrating across the border/LOC. Over the years, the quality of these forces has not been appropriately upgraded effectively to deal with the challenge of the times and this has led to the increased dependence on the Army to fight insurgency. The net result has been to reduce the role of the Indian Army to the level of a para-military force and the para-military forces, in turn, to the level of an ordinary police force. Pakistan has ruthlessly employed terrorism in Punjab, J&K and the North-East to involve the Indian

Army in counter-insurgency operations and neutralise its conventional superiority. Having partially achieved this objective, it has also persuaded itself that nuclear blackmail against India has succeeded on three occasions. A coherent counter-strategy to deal with Pakistan's terrorist-nuclear blackmail and the conventional threat has to be thought through.

13.64 The Committee believes that a comprehensive manpower policy is required to deal with this problem. In the present international security environment, proxy war and terrorism have become preferred means of hurting a neighbour's social, political and economic well-being. Given Pakistan's unrelenting hostility towards this country, it is necessary to evolve a long term strategy to reduce the involvement of the Army in counter-insurgency and devise more cost-effective means of dealing with the problem.

13.65 There has also been criticism that redeployment of military units from CI duty in the Valley to the Kargil sector resulted in providing easy passage for a large number of hardened militants who were infiltrated by Pakistan across the Shamsabari Range into the Kupwara-Uri area and even south of the Pir Panjal.

13.66 The Unified Command was also reorganised, with the Director General Rashtriya Rifles (DGRR) being brought in from Delhi to replace GOC 15 Corps. The latter was relieved of this responsibility to enable him to devote full attention to his principal national defence task. However, within weeks of the conclusion of Operation VIJAY, the status quo ante was restored. The DGRR returned to Delhi and GOC 15 Corps resumed his place in the Unified Command. The Committee also found Unified Command HQ's intelligence structure lacking in timely and continuous analysis and assessment of intelligence, which is critical for the success of CI operations.

13.67 More thought must be given to all these issues. Unified Command HQs have also been set up in Assam from time to time under different circumstances and with a somewhat different structure. But whether in J&K or Assam, there has sometimes been tension both between the Army and para-military/CPO/police formations and between the civil and military authorities. This is an unhappy state of affairs and should not be allowed to linger. The

* Government Security Deletion.

kind of manpower reorganisation the Committee proposes could provide a partial answer, but would still leave untouched the question of how best to structure Unified Command HQs in the future, wherever they might be required.

13.68 The decision taken two years ago to reduce the Indian Army's strength by 50,000 men and reinvest the savings on establishment costs in force modernisation, was a wise one. This reduction in numbers had no bearing on the Kargil crisis and it would be a gross misunderstanding of military realities to believe otherwise.

13.69 In spite of continuing counter-insurgency operations over the past many years, there has been no integrated equipment policy in respect of the Army, para-military and Central police forces. The manpower integration proposed would also ensure compatibility of equipment and render it easier for the Army and the other forces to operate side by side effectively when required to do so.

13.70 There is an equally pressing need to fashion an effective border management policy which covers not only terrorist infiltration, but illegal migration, smuggling and the flow of narcotics. These are all matters of national concern but are being looked at compartmentally. The inevitable result has been sub-optimal border management at a time when the narcotics trade has been playing a crucial role in Pakistan's promotion of cross-border terrorism.

V—The Technological Dimension

13.71 Technology has added significantly to the potential of armies and terrorists. The AK 47 has transformed the lethal potential of the terrorist who has often outgunned the country's security forces in Punjab and J&K. The terrorist comes equipped with rapid fire, stand off weapons, high explosives, wads of currency (real and fake) and sophisticated communications equipment. He can act alone and also as a member of an integrated team. He is highly motivated and often a person conditioned by years of fundamentalist schooling. Despite the challenge of terrorism over the past many years, the Indian Army and other security forces have lagged behind in the quality of their surveillance and communication equipment although technologically superior equipment is readily available the world

over. Only after the Kargil intrusion was direction-finding equipment acquired in increasing numbers. Helicopters employed for air surveillance patrolling do not have sophisticated monitoring and sensing devices. The Kargil battle was fought with less than optimum communications capability. While self-reliance and indigenisation are sound principles, the availability of critical equipment in time of combat is the supreme consideration that must govern acquisition policy. This does not appear to be the case at present and there is no mechanism to monitor that the process of equipment acquisition serves the best interests of the country.

13.72 The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the chain of defence laboratories under its jurisdiction is responsible for indigenising and constantly upgrading the country's weapons and equipment inventory and related supplies. The dilemma has always been to determine the correct balance between "make or buy". There are obvious constraints such as of foreign exchange and the non-availability of state-of-the-art technology from advanced nations which are at best only prepared to share these with their military allies. As a non-aligned power, India has not had access to some of the Western technologies that have flowed to Pakistan. Dual-use technology-denial regimes have also operated against India. These considerations demand that the country develop a degree of self-reliance in defence-related technology and military hardware. Considerable progress has been made in this direction. The achievements in this field can neither be denied nor denigrated. Nevertheless, a number of instances were brought to the notice of the Committee in respect of which there have been significant cost and time overruns in the development and induction of indigenous weapons and equipment for the three Armed Services. While extenuating circumstances can be cited, the fact is that the Services have had to do without such items whereas Pakistan has not been similarly handicapped. Some of these issues were in fact examined in detail by the Committee on Defence Expenditure (1990–91). This report has unfortunately not been made public and, the Committee understands, many of its more substantial recommendations await implementation.

VI—Media Relations and Information

13.73 If the media served the country well, much of the credit goes to the initiative it itself took and to some individuals within the Government and the Armed Forces. Information is power, especially in this Information Age. The media moulds national and international opinion and can be a potent force multiplier. This was evident at Kargil—India's first television war. All things considered, coverage by the print and electronic media was by and large satisfactory. Yet it was apparent that, with some exceptions, media personnel lacked training in military affairs and war reporting and that the Armed Services lacked training and preparedness to facilitate the task of the media and counter disinformation.

13.74 Defence public relations is routinely handled by the Ministry of Defence through regular information service cadres. This establishment is not equipped to handle media relations during war or even proxy war. The briefing function during the Kargil crisis was taken over by a triad of senior military and civil spokesmen. Army Headquarters set up an Information and Psychological Warfare Cell under an officer of the rank of Major General with direct access to the Army Chief. This enabled Army Headquarters both to monitor and disseminate information in a better calibrated manner than would have been the case otherwise.

13.75 Reporting on the campaign revealed a lack of public information about the command structure of the Armed Forces and how responsibilities are distributed within the national intelligence framework. While arrangements were made for official briefings at Delhi, there were inadequate arrangements at the Corps, Division and Brigade levels. Nor were there arrangements to brief officers and men at the ground level on daily developments nor to interface with the civil authorities. The result was generation of a lot of inaccurate information such as the reported capture of a number of Indian Army bunkers (whereas the enemy only occupied one permanent patrol post which had earlier been vacated on account of extreme weather conditions), the existence of three-storied enemy bunkers equipped with television sets, and the purchase by the intruders of cement from the Dras-Kargil market.

13.76 A number of simple misperceptions became apparent in newspaper reports questioning the absence of the Army Chief in Poland during the early part of May 1999 and the Northern Army Commander going to Pune about the same time. The early military appreciation was of limited infiltration in Kargil. Nevertheless, the Corps Commander, in whose area of responsibility the intrusion (as it was subsequently discovered to be) occurred, had acted promptly and vigorously to deal with even larger eventualities. There was no need to cancel the Army Chief's visit which had been long planned and was of some political significance. The COAS remained in touch with developments at home and there was no vacuum in the higher military leadership because of his absence abroad during the early phase of Kargil developments. The Army Commander, in turn, went to Pune for a briefing from his predecessor, Lieutenant General S. Padmanabhan, now Southern Army Commander. He too was in constant touch with his Command and HQ 15 Corps and had already set in motion various precautionary measures.

13.77 Some of all this is inevitable in the fog of war. But efforts have to be made to review information handling procedures within the Armed Forces and their public dissemination. The Army needs such improved public relations capability even otherwise when deployed on counter-insurgency duties. Public relations are presently managed by the Ministry of Defence and at the formation level by military officers who have no media background.

13.78 A comprehensive account of the Kargil operations remains to be brought out. Pakistani political and military leaders have repeatedly highlighted their nuclear capability and their will to use it. Accounts have also appeared in Pakistan of how India was thrice deterred by its nuclear capability. India's reticence in setting the record straight about the earlier conflicts and the developments in the nuclear field appear to have influenced the Pakistani mind-set and led to the adventurous miscalculation over Kargil.

13.79 The first overall briefing on the Kargil situation in the Military Operations Room was given to the Defence and External Affairs Ministers on May 17 with the Chiefs of Staff Committee in attendance. This was followed by a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) chaired by the Prime Minister on May

18 and a briefing of the Prime Minister and Defence Minister on May 24, with the COSC in attendance, by when the magnitude of the Kargil intrusion had been more or less fully assessed. The Army Chief had returned from Poland by May 20 when the CCS met again on May 25,* with the COSC in attendance, and the use of the air power was cleared.

13.80 War and proxy war do not leave the civil population untouched. Human rights violations, civilian casualties, destruction or commandeering of property, refugee movements and the disruption of infrastructure and livelihoods must be expected. This calls for the creation of a civil-military interface at various levels to deal with a whole range of problems on an emergency basis. Such liaison was lacking during the Kargil action and points to a deficiency that must be made good.

13.81 The outcome of the Kargil operation was both a military and diplomatic triumph for India. The Pakistani intruders were evicted with heavier casualties than those suffered by India. The sanctity of the LOC received international recognition and Pakistan was isolated in the comity of nations. While attending to such shortcomings as have been brought to light, the nation can be proud of the manner in which the Armed Forces and the people as a whole acquitted themselves.

VII—Was Kargil Avoidable?

13.82 A Kargil-type situation could perhaps have been avoided had the Indian Army followed a policy of Siachenisation to plug unheld gaps along the 168 km stretch from Kaobal Gali to Chorbat La. This would have entailed establishing a series of winter cut-off posts with communications and other logistic support and specially equipped and trained troops to hold these positions and undertake winter patrolling despite risk of cold injuries and avalanche casualties which would have had to be accepted. Such a dispersal of forces to hold uninhabited territory of no strategic value would have dissipated

* The CCS met formally only on May 25 1999; earlier meetings of May 1999 were briefing sessions.

considerable military strength and effort and would not have been at all cost-effective. If, however, it has had to be done now, such a policy can only be regarded as no more than a temporary expedient. The alternative should be a credible declaratory policy of swiftly punishing wanton and wilful violations of the sanctity of the LOC. This should be supplemented by a comprehensive space and aerial based surveillance system.

Chapter 14

Recommendations

14.1 The findings bring out many grave deficiencies in India's security management system. The framework Lord Ismay formulated and Lord Mountbatten recommended was accepted by a national leadership unfamiliar with the intricacies of national security management. There has been very little change over the past 52 years despite the 1962 debacle, the 1965 stalemate and the 1971 victory, the growing nuclear threat, end of the cold war, continuance of proxy war in Kashmir for over a decade and the revolution in military affairs. The political, bureaucratic, military and intelligence establishments appear to have developed a vested interest in the status quo. National security management recedes into the background in time of peace and is considered too delicate to be tampered with in time of war and proxy war. The Committee strongly feels that the Kargil experience, the continuing proxy war and the prevailing nuclearised security environment justify a thorough review of the national security system in its entirety.

14.2 Such a review cannot be undertaken by an over-burdened bureaucracy. An independent body of credible experts, whether a national commission or one or more task forces or otherwise as expedient, is required to conduct such studies which must be undertaken expeditiously. The specific issues that require to be looked into are set out below.

National Security Council

14.3 The National Security Council (NSC), formally constituted in April 1999, is still evolving and its procedures will take time to mature. Whatever its merits, having a National Security Adviser

who also happens to be Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, can only be an interim arrangement. The Committee believes that there must be a full time National Security Adviser and it would suggest that a second line of personnel be inducted into the system as early as possible and groomed for higher responsibility.

14.4 Members of the National Security Council, the senior bureaucracy servicing it and the Service Chiefs need to be continually sensitised to assessed intelligence pertaining to national, regional and international issues. This can be done through periodic intelligence briefings of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) with all supporting staff in attendance.

Intelligence

14.5 Kargil highlighted the gross inadequacies in the nation's surveillance capability, particularly through satellite imagery. The Committee notes with satisfaction that steps have been initiated to acquire this capability. Every effort must be made and adequate funds provided to ensure that a capability of world standards is developed indigenously and put in place in the shortest possible time. It is for consideration whether a two-stream approach—civil and military—in regard to the downloading and interpretation of the imagery may not be a better alternative than depending on a single agency. Some countries have created a national surveillance command. Since the Indian system is still in the initial stages, decisions taken at this juncture will have long term implications.

14.6 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) also known as Remotely Piloted Vehicles (RPVs), are extremely useful and effective in surveillance, especially if they have night vision and thermal imaging capabilities. UAVs have just been inducted and are operating in the plains under the charge of the Army. Similar efforts should be made for the acquisition of high altitude UAVs. Institutionalised arrangements should be made to ensure that the UAV imagery generated is disseminated to the concerned intelligence agencies as quickly as possible. UAVs could also prove effective in counter-insurgency operations. They may replace WASO patrols in the long run. However, in the interim, the possibility of using more stable WASO platforms

than Cheetah helicopters and equipping them with thermal imaging sensors should be explored.

14.7 The most spectacular intelligence coup of the Kargil operations was the interception of a series of high level Islamabad–Beijing telephone conversations. This highlights the capabilities of communication intelligence which in India is fragmented among a number of agencies and is not adequately funded. The equipment needs to be modernised in keeping with the advances made by Pakistan in inducting advanced communication technologies. There has also been a gross shortage of direction-finding equipment which could contribute significantly to counter-insurgency operations.

14.8 The United States has grouped all its communication and electronic intelligence efforts within a single organisation, the National Security Agency (NSA). The desirability of setting up a similar organisation in India with adequate resources for this extremely important and non-intrusive method of gathering technological intelligence calls for examination. Adequate attention has not been paid to developing encryption and decryption skills. The centralised communication and electronic intelligence agency should feed all the information it generates to the country's premier national intelligence agency which should in turn disseminate this material to all concerned users. The problems and purposes of monitoring communications within the country and the effort devoted to listen in on external communications are different. Increasingly, organised crime and anti-national elements are using encrypted communications. While the effort to build up adequate communication and electronic intelligence capability should be tailored to suit India's particular needs, parochial departmental interests should be effectively countered.

14.9 In many advanced countries, technological intelligence collection is undertaken by an integrated Defence Intelligence Agency with adequate resources. In India, the defence intelligence effort is limited in relation to the role assigned to the external intelligence agency (R&AW) except for limited tactical and signal intelligence. The resources made available to the Defence Services for intelligence collection are not commensurate with the responsibility assigned to them. There are distinct advantages in having two lines

of intelligence collection and reporting, with a rational division of functions, responsibilities and areas of specialisation. The Committee is of the view that the issue of setting up an integrated defence intelligence agency needs examination.

14.10 The Committee has drawn attention to deficiencies in the present system of collection, reporting, collation and assessment of intelligence. There is no institutionalised mechanism for coordination or objective-oriented interaction between the agencies and consumers at different levels. Similarly, there is no mechanism for tasking the agencies, monitoring their performance and reviewing their records to evaluate their quality. Nor is there any oversight of the overall functioning of the agencies. These are all standard features elsewhere in the world. In the absence of such procedures, the Government and the nation do not know whether they are getting value for money. While taking note of recent steps to entrust the NSCS with some of these responsibilities the Committee recommends a thorough examination of the working of the intelligence system with a view to remedying these deficiencies.

14.11 All major countries have a mechanism at the national and often at lower levels to assess the intelligence inputs received from different agencies and sources. After the 1962 debacle, the then existing JIC under the Chiefs of Staff Committee was upgraded and transferred to the Cabinet Secretariat. It was further upgraded in 1985 with the Chairman being raised to the rank of Secretary to the Government. The Committee finds that for various reasons cited in the Report, the JIC was devalued. Its efficacy has increased since it became part of the National Security Council Secretariat. However, its role and place in the national intelligence framework should be evaluated in the context of overall reform of the system.

14.12 Pakistan's action at Kargil was not rational. Its behaviour patterns require to be carefully studied in order to gain a better understanding of the psyche of its leadership. In other countries, intelligence agencies have developed large "White Wings" of high quality analysts for in-house analysis. They also contract studies with university departments and think tanks with area specialisation. This is sadly neglected in India. The development of such country/region specialisation along with associated language skills is a time

consuming process and should not be further delayed. A generalist administration culture would appear to permeate the intelligence field. It is necessary to establish think tanks, encourage country specialisation in university departments and to organise regular exchanges of personnel between them and the intelligence community.

Counter-terrorist Operations

14.13 There is general agreement that in the light of the new situation of proxy war and large scale terrorism that the country faces, the role and the tasks of the para-military forces have to be restructured particularly with reference to command and control and leadership functions. They need to be trained to much higher standards of performance and better equipped to deal with terrorist threats. The possibility of adopting an integrated manpower policy for the Armed Forces, para-military forces and the Central police forces merits examination.

14.14 The Army must be young and fit at all times. Therefore, instead of the present practice of having 17 years of colour service (as has been the policy since 1976), it would be advisable to reduce the colour service to a period of seven to ten years and, thereafter, release these officers and men for service in the country's para-military formations. After an appropriate period of service here, older cadres might be further streamed into the regular police forces or absorbed in a National Service Corps (or a National Conservation Corps), as provided for under Article 51A(d) of the Constitution, to spearhead a range of land and water conservation and physical and social infrastructure development on the model of some eco-development battalions that have been raised with a fair measure of success. This would reduce the age profile of the Army and the para-military forces, and also reduce pension costs and other entitlements such as married quarters and educational facilities. The Army pension bill has risen exponentially since the 1960s and is becoming an increasing burden on the national exchequer. Army pensions rose from Rs. 1,568 crore in 1990-91 to Rs. 6,932 crore (budgeted) in 1999-2000, the equivalent of almost two-thirds of the current Army salary bill.

14.15 The para-military and police forces have their own ethos and traditions and might well be chary of such lateral induction as has been proposed. This objection might be overcome were the para-military forces to undertake recruitment on the basis of certain common national military standards and then send those selected for training and absorption in the Army for a period of colour service before reverting to their parent para-military formations. The Committee is aware of the complexities and sensitivities involved in any such security manpower reorganisation. Nevertheless, national security dictates certain imperatives which the country may ignore only at its peril. The proposed reorganisation would make a career in the armed forces attractive on the basis of the lifetime employment offered by the two- or three-tiered secondment formula.

Border Management

14.16 Border management has become immensely more complex over the years. It is now handled by the Assam Rifles, the Border Security Force and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police. Border fencing in Punjab has produced positive results. Elsewhere, vested interests have come in the way of effective border management. The smuggling of narcotics, man-portable arms and explosives, illegal migration and the infiltration of trained mercenaries have all exacerbated border management. Narcotics is dealt with by the Finance Ministry while other aspects are handled by the Home Ministry. If the country is to acquire increased capabilities for area surveillance and electronic fencing, the present structure and procedures for border patrolling must be reviewed. The Committee is therefore of the view that the entire issue needs detailed study in order to evolve force structures and procedures that ensure improved border management and a reduction, if not the elimination, in the inflow of narcotics, illegal migrants, terrorists and arms.

Defence Budget and Modernisation

14.17 A number of experts have at various times suggested the need to enhance India's Defence outlays as budgetary constraints

have affected the process of modernisation and created certain operational voids. The Committee would not like to advocate any percentage share of GDP that should be assigned to defence. This must be left to the Government to determine in consultation with the concerned departments and the Defence Services.

14.18 Among aspects of modernisation to which priority should be given is that of equipping infantrymen with superior light weight weapons, equipment and clothing suited to the threats they are required to face in alpine conditions.

National Security Management and Apex Decision-making

14.19 India is perhaps the only major democracy where the Armed Forces Headquarters are outside the apex governmental structure. The Chiefs of Staff have assumed the role of operational commanders of their respective forces rather than that of Chiefs of Staff to the Prime Minister and Defence Minister. They simultaneously discharge the roles of operational commanders and national security planners/managers, especially in relation to future equipment and force postures. Most of their time, is, however, devoted to the operational role, as is bound to happen. This has led to a number of negative results. Future-oriented long term planning suffers. Army Headquarters has developed a command rather than a staff culture. Higher decisions on equipment, force levels and strategy are not collegiate but command-oriented. The Prime Minister and Defence Minister do not have the benefit of the views and expertise of the Army Commanders and their equivalents in the Navy and Air Force so that higher level defence management decisions are more consensual and broadbased. The present obsolete system has perpetuated the continuation of the culture of the British Imperial theatre system of an India Command whereas what is required is a National Defence Headquarters. Most opposition to change comes from inadequate knowledge of the national security decision-making process elsewhere in the world and a reluctance to change the status quo and move away from considerations of parochial interest. The status quo is often mistakenly defended as embodying civilian ascendancy

over the armed forces, which is not a real issue. In fact, locating the Services' Headquarters in the Government will further enhance civilian supremacy.

14.20 Structural reforms could bring about a much closer and more constructive interaction between the Civil Government and the Services. The Committee is of the view that the present obsolete system, bequeathed to India by Lord Ismay, merits re-examination. An effective and appropriate national security planning and decision-making structure for India in the nuclear age is overdue, taking account of the revolution in military affairs and threats of proxy war and terrorism and the imperative of modernising the Armed Forces. An objective assessment of the last 52 years will show that the country is lucky to have scraped through various national security threats without too much damage, except in 1962. The country can no longer afford such ad hoc functioning. The Committee therefore recommends that the entire gamut of national security management and apex decision-making and the structure and interface between the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces Headquarters be comprehensively studied and reorganised.

India's Nuclear Policy

14.21 The Report clearly brings out that, beginning with Indira Gandhi, successive Prime Ministers displayed extreme sensitivity towards the nuclear issue and consistently supported an Indian nuclear weapons programme. They judged it necessary to envelop it in the utmost secrecy and consequently did not take their own party colleagues, the Armed Forces and senior civil servants into confidence. This has caused many in the country to believe that India's nuclear weaponisation programme is a departure from the traditional policy of merely keeping the nuclear option open indefinitely. The record must be set straight. The contribution of Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, V.P. Singh, Chandra Shekhar, Narsimha Rao, Deve Gowda and Inder Gujral to India's emergence as a nuclear weapon state, and the compulsions on them to ensure this, should be made known. The record clearly establishes that the Indian nuclear weapons programme had a much wider consensus than is generally

believed. The Committee therefore recommends the publication of a White Paper on the Indian nuclear weapons programme. This will also bring out the stark facts of the evolution of Pakistan's nuclear capability with assistance from countries who tirelessly decry proliferation, and the threats posed to India through nuclear blackmail.

Media Relations and Information

14.22 Kargil was the first war which Indian correspondents covered by going to the front in significant numbers. It was also the country's first television war and one in which the Indian Army had to handle the media right on the battlefield. This has been a learning experience for the Government, the Armed Forces and the media. Neither the Northern Army Command nor HQ 15 Corps nor the lower field formations had media cells which could cater to the requirements of the press corps. This reveals an obvious lacuna which must be plugged. The Army has decided to revive and upgrade its war correspondents' course at the College of Combat, Mhow. The media should avail of this opportunity so that there is a cadre of trained war correspondents at any time. Simultaneously, media relations and the techniques and implications of information war and perception management must form a distinct and important module at all levels of military training. It must also be recognised that the media has to be serviced at many levels—national, local and international. None is less important than the other.

14.23 While dealing with the information issue, the Committee would also like to draw attention to the fact that Indian security forces are deployed year round in very difficult and inhospitable terrain ranging from high mountains to dense forests and sandy deserts. The US Armed Forces usually operate dedicated radio and TV channels to entertain and inform their armed forces when deployed overseas. The Government should seriously consider similar dedicated facilities for the Indian Armed Forces. If such facilities had been available at the time of Kargil, some of the misleading reports and rumours that gained currency could have been effectively countered.

14.24 This Report brings out the vast gap between the actual policies pursued by the Government and developments on the ground on the one hand and popular perceptions derived from public pronouncements on the other. In a democracy, it is incumbent on the Government to reduce any such gap. While the country's nuclear programme must remain confidential, there was a failure on the part of successive Prime Ministers to educate the people on the realities of nuclear security confronting the country. In the case of defence policy and insurgency situations, sufficient public information is not available. There is no single, comprehensive official publication containing details of the Kashmir question, the UN resolutions and why they could not be implemented, as well as of more recent developments in Kashmir through the years of proxy war, terrorism and ethnic cleansing together with Pakistan's involvement in all of these. The Government must review its information policy and develop structures and processes to keep the public informed on vital national issues.

14.25 It would appear that one of the major factors influencing Pakistan's aggressive behaviour in 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999 has been its self-image of martial superiority and a deliberately cultivated perception of an ineffectual Indian Army and a weak and vacillating Indian Government. Though Pakistan was discomfited in all the four military adventures it undertook, it has attempted to portray each of them as a narrowly-missed victory. Even the 1971 defeat is blamed on the Soviet Union. Developments in Afghanistan and its final denouement have been portrayed as projecting Pakistani military prowess in defeating the Soviet superpower. India has not published authoritative histories of the 1965 and 1971 wars. It is necessary to publish authentic accounts of the 1965 and 1971 wars and to establish the facts. While this Report appends, with appropriate security deletions, the three Service Headquarters' presentations of Operation VIJAY, Operation SAFED SAGAR and Operation TALWAR, that were made before the Committee, we recommend that an authoritative account of this unique high altitude war be published at an early date. Further to these, communicating the scope, extent and history of India's nuclear weapons programme should be an essential part of the exercise of deterrence. The record

needs to be set right, not through strident propaganda, but by a cold marshalling of the facts regarding contemporary events and past history.

Technology

14.26 The longstanding controversy between the Services and the DRDO on drawing the line between “make” or “buy” resulted in the formulation of a new Procurement Policy in 1995. This liberalised the procedures for the import of equipment as against its indigenous development. However, this policy needs periodic review in the light of changing circumstances. Experience would suggest that such a review is presently overdue. One problem the DRDO faces is that the Armed Forces borrow unique features from weapons and equipment on offer from advanced military suppliers around the world and marry these in their “General Staff Requirements” to make “impossible” demands. There is an element of truth in this assertion but none can be faulted for desiring the best. A true partnership must be established between the Services and the DRDO to ensure that the latter gets full backing and funding from the Services and the former, in turn, get the indented equipment they require without undue delay.

14.27 The design and development of special materials as well as defence stores and equipment often entails working at the frontiers of technology. It is therefore possible and desirable to harness national talent wherever it lies—in the Universities and IITs, and in the private and public sectors—and not only within the DRDO and designated defence undertakings. Casting the net wider would be advantageous and would ensure a greater degree of competition and technological spin-off into the civil sector. This would also facilitate defence exports, the better utilisation of highly sophisticated industrial capacity and related manpower and enable defence laboratories and defence undertakings to concentrate on those areas which cannot be hived off to the civil sector, public or private, on grounds of high security or limited applicability of end use for civilian purposes. There is a whole gamut of issues here which merits consideration.

Civil–Military Liaison

14.28 The establishment of a civil–military liaison mechanism at various levels, from the ranking Command HQ to the operational formations on the ground, Division, Brigade or Battalion, is most necessary to smoothen relationships during times of emergency and stress, like war and proxy war, and to ensure that there is no room for friction and alienation of the local population. Situations of no-war-no-peace call for norms and procedures that avoid delay and endless red tape. Relocating villages behind the Army’s forward defence line in J&K can best be done through an initially limited experimental move and further action on the basis of policies evolved as a result of that learning experience. Likewise, steps should be taken to issue ID Cards to border villagers in certain vulnerable areas on a priority basis, pending its extension to other or all parts of the State. Such a policy would also be relevant in the North-East, Sikkim and part of West Bengal.

14.29 The Kargil sector and other areas along the LOC have suffered loss and damage on account of war and shelling. A rehabilitation programme for Kargil must be put in place as a precursor to a longer term development package that includes the completion of by-pass roads for strategic movements between Zojila and Leh. This will render NH-1A an exclusively civilian highway and not a military target, skirting as it does a part of the LOC in this sector.

14.30 The dedication and valour of the Ladakh Scouts and J&K Light Infantry merits recognition through the raising of additional units of these regiments with a higher component of men from Kargil being inducted into the Ladakh Scouts.

Declaratory Policy for LOC

14.31 More attention should be given to monitoring and analysing developments and trends in “Azad J&K” and the Northern Areas which are in ferment and whose fate and future cannot be divorced from any consideration of the Kashmir Question. Likewise, the Kashmiri diaspora overseas must be kept better informed about the situation in J&K and what happened in Kargil.

14.32 Misperceptions and ambiguities about the Siachen/AGPL sector need to be dispelled and the facts of “cartographic aggression” here made known. There is no warrant for departing from the logic of extending the LOC from NJ 9842 and “thence north to the glaciers” as set out in the delineation of the Ceasefire Line under the Karachi Agreement of July 29, 1949 which was subsequently converted into the Line of Control by the Simla Agreement in 1992. This broadly upholds the current Actual Ground Position Line. The fallacy of showing the LOC as running northeast to the Karakoram Pass must be exposed.

14.33 The country must not fall into the trap of Siachenisation of the Kargil heights and similar unheld unpopulated “gaps” in the High Himalaya along the entire length of the Northern border. The proper response would be a declaratory policy that deliberate infringement of the sanctity of the LOC and wanton cross-border terrorism in furtherance of proxy war will meet with prompt retaliation in a manner, time and place of India’s choosing. Pakistan and the world must know that India’s defence of the integrity of its own territory, including that within its own side of the LOC, is not and cannot be held to be escalatory and that the aggressor and his victim cannot be bracketed and placed on par.

14.34 Such a declaratory policy must be backed with credible measures in J&K to win back alienated sections of the population, attend to genuine discontents, political and economic, and enable the victims of ethnic cleansing to return to their homes in the Valley or elsewhere in the State with security and honour. To this end, the Union and State Governments must jointly initiate a twin policy of reform and devolution to and within J&K and a dialogue with Pakistan. India’s commitment to maintaining the sanctity of the LOC/AGPL and the international endorsement of this position won during the Kargil crises has within it the seeds of a larger, long term settlement that can bring enduring peace and tranquillity to J&K and stable and cooperative Indo–Pakistan relations on the basis of the Simla–Lahore process within the framework of SAARC.

Epilogue

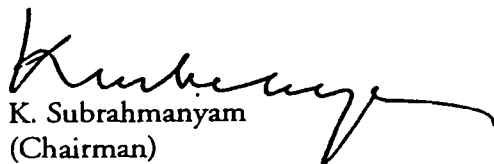
Four hundred and seventy four officers and men of the Indian Armed Forces laid down their lives in Kargil to protect the integrity of the country against an act of war unleashed by Pakistan under cover of a peace process initiated in Lahore. Many innocent civilians too lost their lives and property and found their livelihood disrupted, as had tens of thousands earlier through years of proxy war. The entire nation united in grief with widows and parents across the land to mourn the blood, tears and treasure invested in Kargil.

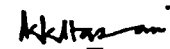
The Kargil Review Committee was not set up to conduct an inquiry but to examine the sequence of events and make recommendations for the future. There are many lessons that the Armed Forces, Intelligence Agencies, Parliament, Government, media and the nation as a whole must learn. These have been set out in the Committee’s Findings which should stimulate introspection and reflection, leading to purposeful action.


The Committee trusts that its recommendations will be widely discussed and acted upon with expedition so that the 474 who sacrificed their lives will not have died in vain. The best tribute to their supreme dedication and example will be to ensure that “Kargils” of any description are never repeated.


There is both comfort and danger in clinging to any long established status quo. There will be many who counsel the most careful (read prolonged) deliberation. Procrastination has cost nations dear. Others will no doubt advocate incremental change. Half measures will not do; synergy will be lost. The Committee has after very wide interaction sign-posted directions along the path to peace, ensuring the progress, development and stability of the nation. How exactly the country should proceed to refashion its Security-Intelligence-

Development shield to meet the challenge of the 21st Century is for the Government, Parliament and public opinion to determine. There is no turning away from that responsibility.


K. Subrahmanyam
(Chairman)

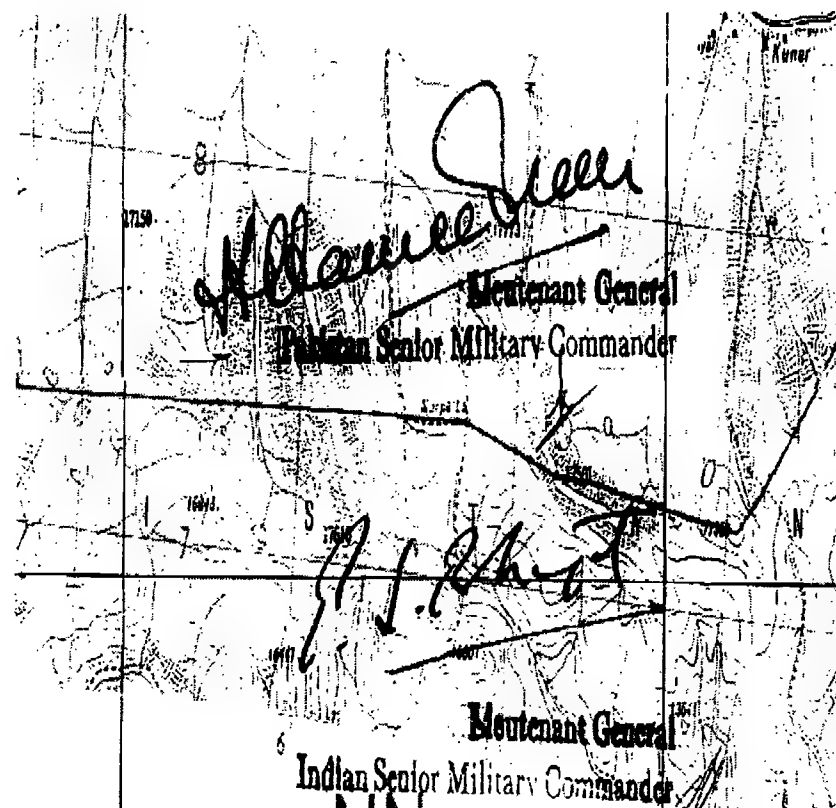

K.K. Hazari
(Member)


B.G. Verghese
(Member)


Satish Chandra
(Member Secretary)

New Delhi,
15 December 1999

Suchetgarh Agreement December 11, 1972



Para 4: "Having completed the task given to them, the representatives of the Chiefs of Army Staff of Pakistan and India now submit the agreed delineation of the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with Paragraph 4 (ii) of the Simla Agreement signed between the Government of India and Government of Pakistan on 2 July 1972 and described in Appendix 'A' (Annexures 1 to 19) and reproduced on mosaics also marked as Annexures 1 to 19, to their respective Chiefs of the Army Staff for securing approval of their respective Governments."

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